

CHRIST AND HIS SEED

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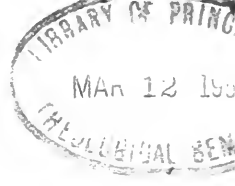


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CHRIST AND HIS SEED.



CHRIST AND HIS SEED:

CENTRAL TO ALL THINGS:

BEING A SERIES OF EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES IN PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

BY JOHN PULSFORD,
AUTHOR OF 'QUIET HOURS.'

"He shall see His Seed."—ISAIAH.

"Behold ! I and the children, which God hath given Me."

ISAIAH AND PAUL.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.
EDINBURGH: EDMONSTON AND DOUGLAS.

1872.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

A BRIEF SUMMARY.

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INTRODUCTION.

EPHESUS, beautiful for situation, a city of marble and gold, luxury and refinement, was for long a very celebrated centre in this world. The sun, it is said, saw nothing in his whole course more magnificent than the temple of Ephesus.

The preaching of Paul at Ephesus was like the peal of doom. Alarm spread throughout all ranks. The whole city was in an uproar. Not only Diana of the Ephesians, but all the gods of Asia and of the world will fall before Jesus, "Whom Paul preacheth." No such power had ever been known as that which accompanied his words. By the space of three years he made Ephesus ring with the New Name, "So that all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." Judaism may resist, idolatry and philosophy may resist, but the new Power will prevail. The Roman Empire will break up, but the words and the work of Paul will endure for ever. Paul at Ephesus.
Acts xix. 10.

Ephesus may rave against him by the hour, and Athens mock; but neither of them, nor any city in the world, in which he lifts his voice, will ever more be what it was before. Destruction and re-construction will every where follow his word. More than any man, he will affect the history of the world. He will hold his ascendancy over nations of souls for ages. Europe owes more to this man than to all her emperors put together.

If the Gospel is a feeblér power in our hands, perhaps upon inquiry we shall find, that, while in Paul's case, Christ occupied the centre of his soul, and thence reigned over his whole An inquiry.

being ; in our case, He is removed from the centre to an outer and colder region. If so, we need be at no loss to account for our want of power. The January and the June sun are the same sun, but how different the power, and how marvelously different the results ! The June sun fills the world with bloom and fruit, the January sun is too feeble to produce even leaves. Let Christ win His way to the throne of our souls ; let Him reign as the Truth in our understandings, and as the Love of God in our hearts ; and a day of new power and glory will break upon the world.

An exceeding great army are thinking, writing, speaking, and labouring for Christ : in due time, He will fill this host with His Divine Power, and the Age of ages will be ushered in. What if it be already dawning !

Paul's healing
power.

Acts xix. 11,
12.

v. 13.

1 Cor. xvi. 9.

The mutual
love between
Paul and his
converts.

Paul had not been long in Ephesus before it was discovered, not only that his words were powerful, but that an atmosphere of surpassing virtue emanated from his person : " God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." The acknowledged power of the Name, Jesus, became so great in Ephesus, that the Jewish exorcists used it over the possessed, saying, " We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." Writing to the Corinthians, concerning his work in Ephesus, he says, " A great door and effectual is opened to me." " So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed," that the magicians and sorcerers who practised occult arts, " brought their books together and burned them before all men."

Towards converts so suddenly startled into a new life, and so ardent in their first love, as were the Ephesians, Paul was marvellously drawn out. He gave them his soul : he " kept nothing back." His epistle is a monument and testimony for ever, of the surprising riches of understanding, and freedom of utterance, which God gave to him towards this young church. We need not inquire whether it was meant by Paul to be a circular letter. God meant it for all time, and for all men every where, " who are in Christ Jesus." The good which

Paul has done by this single letter, it is impossible to estimate; nor has it yet nearly fulfilled its service. It is as "mighty through God" to-day, as it was eighteen centuries ago. It will feed and refresh the Church of God to the end of time. It will be had in everlasting remembrance in heaven. No work, no word, of which the love of Christ is the spring, can ever cease to operate. It has in itself a seed of living power through which it is endlessly reproductive. Works and words which do not spring from the creature's personality, nor from place, nor from time, but from Christ and eternity, must bring forth fruit to God, through all time, unto eternity.

The depth and endlessness of the relation between Paul and his Ephesian friends was felt on the sea-shore, on that memorable day, when his bodily presence was torn from them. "Paul kneeled down and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on his neck and kissed him; sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more."

The eternity
of love.

Acts xx. 36-38.

But no severance of those who are in Christ Jesus can be for long. After the last things on earth, come the new things in heaven. The pain of parting only prepares an intenser joy for the new meeting. The eternal days of God's right hand will witness the glowing unity made by the intense affections which played between Paul, as their father in Christ, and his Ephesian children.

He sends to them however his "dearly beloved son Timothy," to be his representative, and their minister. It is interesting likewise to know that the beloved disciple, in the latter part of his life, resided at Ephesus.

I.

PAUL SALUTES THE FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS ; EXTOLS GOD, THE FATHER, AS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE AND BLESSING ; AND TAKES A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE PURPOSE AND PLAN OF HIS LOVE TOWARDS US. CHAP. I. 1-14.

CHAP. I. 1-4. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus. 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*

Saul becomes Paul.

Ver. 1. "*Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ,*" &c. Is this that fierce enemy of Jesus, who kept the garments of the men who stoned Stephen ? Is this he, who having witnessed the more than human meekness of the first martyr, and having heard him with his last breath pray for his murderers, continued to breathe out "threatenings and slaughters against the disciples of the Lord?" Yes, and no. It is he; and yet it is not. He is become another man. He was a Pharisee of the strictest sect; but no trace of his sect remains in him, and not much of the Jew. The Pharisee is dead, the Jew supplanted; and the universal humanity of the Lord Jesus is quickened and built up in him. In mind, in heart, in character and in purpose, he is a new man; and all things are new to him. God is new to him. The Scriptures are new to him. The future is new to him. And he has altogether a new interest in men. It has been made known to him that Jesus, Whom he persecuted, is only another name for The Universal Truth, the Son of God, the Maker of heaven and earth. He perceives therefore, that "every knee

of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth," will have to bow to the Name of Jesus, and that "every tongue" will have to "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He perceives that Jesus is the very Root, and underlying Spirit of Humanity; and consequently that He is the Founder and Builder of the only possible human kingdom. Ephemeral nationalities, and would-be sovereignties there may be; but he is sure that there will never be another King in God, save Jesus, nor another kingdom of the human race in God, save the kingdom which is growing out from Christ, and in Christ. His opposition to Him, was furious, but ignorant and shallow: his devotion to Him is calm and profound. His whole reason consents, his heart is at rest. Christ can only be opposed by the superficial mind. The deeper spirit in man can never be made to oppose itself, to that Perfect Unity of the Son of God and the Son of Man, of which Christ is the manifestation. To resist Christ is at once to resist the fulness of Godhead, the Unity of Wisdom, and the glory of humanity. Let us never forget the tender apology, which once for all, our Lord makes for unbelievers: "They know not what they do." "Had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." "*Because they knew Him not*, nor the voices of the prophets, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." Not knowing Him, men neither know God, nor themselves. The key is one and the same to the Divine Nature and to the inmost sanctuary of human nature. Apart from Jesus Christ, man is locked out from the knowledge of God, from the superior region of his own nature, and from the kingdom of heaven. He rambles about in confusion and darkness, not knowing whither he is going. To him there is no way of peace, no Father's House, no Eternal Life.

Phil. ii. 10, 11.

Opposition to Christ is always shallow.

1 Cor. ii. 8.

Acts xiii. 27.

—"to the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus." Saints, according to New Testament usage, are those who of God's "abundant mercy have been begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." So far as their old nature prevails in them they are not saints. The only holy thing in them is their new nature. As a son of Adam, Paul declares that his heritage is a "body of death,"

Saints.

1 Peter i. 3.

"The faithful."

Rom. vi. 6.
Rom. vii. 17.
Gal. ii. 20.

Grace.

1 Pet. i. 23.
1 Pet. ii. 2.

Peace.

The new man
outbreathes a
life from God.

Jno. vii. 38.

Luke x. 5, 6.

2 Cor. ii. 15

The Blessed
Father.

and he, a "wretched man." "The faithful in Christ Jesus" are those who, with Paul, repudiate and disown their fallen nature, who regard their new humanity in Christ Jesus as their only personality. "Our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin may be destroyed." "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Ver. 2. "*Grace be to you.*" Grace is the "meat indeed," and the "drink indeed" of the new nature. The "new born babes," born again of the Incorruptible Word, Who liveth and abideth for ever, can only be nourished by the genuine milk of His Life.

"Peace" is the perfect rest of the new nature. Between all things in God, and all things in the new nature, there is a deep and rich harmony. It is the many stringed harp of the soul brought into tuneful, indestructible accord with the whole government and purpose of God. It "passeth understanding."

The new Man is "a habitation for God." He breathes out his desires, not from his own life alone, but "*from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.*" The salutation of such an one is not in word only. He is not a mere messenger of Christ, but a medium. We must assuredly believe that whenever Paul wrote: "Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ," there was an actual outgoing of grace and peace, from God, through him. No one can live in God without being a channel for God. The vessel that receives its supply from an exhaustless source must overflow. Our Lord, Who spake no vain words, declared of His true disciple, that "rivers of living water" should flow out from him. These living streams of grace and peace can never be lost. They may be rejected by those whom you desire to bless; but in that case, our Lord says, they return to you again. What you give you have. The river of life which flows, and flows evermore, from God, having completed its circuit, returns to God again. "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish."

Ver 3. "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" &c. It should give a childlike rest and confidence to

our hearts, that all our blessings come, and will for ever come, from a Fatherly source. The God and Father of all our mercies and hopes must be a most blessed Father. Whoever breathes towards men the spirit of "grace and peace," pours out a very full heart towards God. Having blessed men from the Father, Paul immediately turns from them to adore the Father. To trace the wondrous Life-River to its Fountain, must ever be the supreme exercise, and the intensest pleasure both of the understanding and the heart of man. Ever and ever springing from its own hidden abysses in the Divine Nature, it flows through all worlds visible and invisible, clothing the whole universe with beauty, and giving life to countless kingdoms and orders of creatures. "O Well—Lahai Roi!" Thou Living and Life-giving, Thou Seeing and Sight-giving River! In Thy Life we live, in Thy Light we see light. Many kingdoms,—the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the natural human kingdom,—drink only of divided properties of this River. Renewed man, man in Christ, drinks into himself the whole unity of its properties. To gather all the streams and all the properties of Life's river together again into humanity, was one of the special objects of His Incarnation. To be in Christ, therefore, is to be set into the meeting of all the waters of God. "Thou shalt make them drink of the River of Thy Pleasures." The pleasures include every variety, and constitute the "Fulness of Joy," which in the children of the Great Father, sings and exults before Him, in His own endlessness. All the children coming with sweetest reverence, and deepest gladness to drink of The Fountain, and to worship, enter into a thrice blessed family-life towards each other, a life strictly in God, and therefore in the eternity of His love and delights. The well of the soul in the very act of springing up to God, refreshes many a thirsty spirit. All rivers flow to the ocean, but on their way thereto, they bless myriads of creatures, and quicken myriads of roots. How can we come to God, without also coming to the children who are about Him? We dare not define the limits of the love-spirit which is poured out from human souls to God. "Thou canst not tell whither it goeth." Know this, that in coming to God, thou

Ps. xxxvi. 8.

Source of the
Life-river.

comest to angels and spirits innumerable. God certainly makes no selfish use of the love which flows to Him from His children. God and all His children make one communion. Every child contributes his measure of love to the inter-communion of heaven and earth. The elements of nature can neither hold nor absorb any single affection that rises from the soul to God. It is a power and a charm in the great soul-world, it traverses the heavens, it finds God. By how much the fire is purer, by so much it is more diffusive. Love to God is the purest fire of the soul.

“The God
and Father of
our Lord
Jesus.”

—“*The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” New Testament writers knew that nature, in its outer form, has lost its integrity or first estate, and become subject to corruption and vanity; and that therefore it does not faithfully reflect God. The death of Christ, and His ascension to Heaven in a new and glorious form, opened their eyes to the disharmony between God and all the forms of temporal nature. Between the sphere of the Divine Purity, and the present visible creation, there is a vast border-land, peopled by innumerable legions of fallen spiritual powers. And every Divine operation in the whole sphere of visible nature is conditioned by the surrounding media. When, therefore, the regenerate child of God outpours his blessing to “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” his affections leave this mixed and adulterous creation far behind.

The true
mirror of
God's glory.

Not in the crude earth, nor any of its forms of vanity, not in transient and putrescible vegetation, not in the atmosphere so often doleful, and swept by violent storms, not in beasts, nor in men, nor in anything that the sun shines upon, can we discern the truth about God. The one pure and fitting reflection of the Glory of God, is the transfigured and ascended Humanity of Jesus Christ. “Blessed be the God and Father of *our Lord Jesus Christ.*” While in the likeness of our flesh, even Jesus did not represent the Glory of God. “We have known Christ after the flesh,” but we shall never more behold Him in “this body of our humiliation.” Not by His birth of the Virgin Mary, but by His ascension, was He “declared to be the Son of God with power.”

Indeed Paul's words in this place do not allow us to think of Jesus, as He was, prior to His crucifixion. He writes, not Jesus Christ; but "our *Lord* Jesus Christ." Blessed be the God and Father of the Eternal Light which was in the beginning with God and which was God, and which realized its supreme bodily manifestation, when the man Christ Jesus was glorified; "angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to Him."

The children of God should see that their thoughts of the Son of God are not held subject to the form of His humiliation, but rather that they are elevated to the conception of the Glory which He had with the Father before the world was, and which, as Man, He inherits now, for evermore. "Thou art the king of Glory, O Christ." Blessed be the God and Father of Glory.

—"Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavens in Christ."—There is a blessing from God in the health of our bodies and in the comforts of our homes, in the bounty of the seasons and the variety of our pleasures; but believers in Christ tenderly and adoringly acknowledge far other blessings than these. Our earthly blessings are but the shadows of blessings. Corruption and vanity attach to them all. They cannot abide with us. They comfort us, much as the gourd did Jonah; but there is a worm at the root of them all. They win upon our hearts, we are held by them, as in a delicious snare; but while we dream of delights and delights, the withering season has already commenced, and the hour hastens which will see us stript and broken-hearted. Our Heavenly Father's blessings in Christ Jesus will never wither, nor leave us. Has Christ a "glorious body?" has He an incorruptible kingdom? will He reign in life and glory for ever? His blessedness and ours are the same. "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them."

Our blessings
in Christ.

All spiritual blessings are His. All that the Father hath is His, and what is His, is ours. The lot which God has ordained and purposed for us by a covenant well ordered and sure, is that our life shall be in Him, and our portion with Him

Jno. xvii. 22.

for ever. A great welcome and a home await us in the heavenlies; our eternal fortune is made; all the angels are our friends. The life of the Son of God in us is the key that will open all the secrets of wisdom and glory. In His life "all things are ours." It constitutes a universal introduction. The whole inheritance of our Father's House is open to us. All its mansions are ours to explore and enjoy.

As to the nature of our inheritance, it is pure, glorious, and incorruptible; as to the number of our possessions and pleasures, they are "all;" as to the duration of our life, it is eternal.

There are no assignable limits to our inheritance; for God has made His Son "Heir of all things," and us "joint-heirs with Him." What secrets, or what celestial abodes, can be closed against us? The limitations which our own capacities impose upon us are another thing. Michael and Gabriel, and every prince-angel, have their respective kingdoms, and their own peculiar natures and powers; but the Kingdom of the Incarnation is a universality. It includes "all things." Great and marvellous is God's purpose, towards us in Christ Jesus. "How precious are Thy thoughts to me, O God."

By our faith in Christ we have found much more than salvation from sin and hell, much more than "the way of peace;" we have entered upon a series of Divine ascents. New, higher, wider wonders and glories, will open before us, world without end. The revelation of what is meant by "all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ," will occupy and fill eternity.

But let us be on our guard against a specious, false spirituality. We must not make our inheritance to be more spiritual than shall correspond with the glorified Body of our Lord. The spirituality which drops the idea of our true humanity is to be resisted and abhorred. Satan, as a most spiritual angel of "light," commends to us mere abstractions, instead of our truly human blessings in Christ Jesus. Christ is the Restorer and glorifier of our whole nature. Satan knows perfectly well that a Christianity, which is simply a fine-spun scheme of

Rev. xv. 3.
Ps. cxxxix. 17.

The spurious
spiritual.

thought, will never have any real power in the world. Christ builds *men*. He brings us to no shining vacuity, to no mere heaven of thought. He finds us a base-human world, and makes us a Divine-human world. The human heart purified, the human mind enlarged, the human character ennobled, the human form perfected, and glowing with the glory of God, and a corresponding eternal kingdom, are the spiritual blessings which our Heavenly Father has made sure to us in Jesus Christ. The only salvation which He proposes to us, is to raise us to the stature of perfect men. Perfected humanity, enjoyed in a perfect human world, with the man Christ Jesus for our king, is our hope. Our inheritance and all its blessings, our occupations and our joys, will be human for ever. Let us be impatient therefore of abstract terms and doctrines. Let us reject and loathe every gospel, save that only which indicates the means and methods of perfecting our nature.

CHAP. I. 4-8.—*According as he hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him; 5 Having, in love, predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted (gracious persons) in the Beloved. 7 In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace; 8 which He hath made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.*

The word foundation (*καταβολή*) suggests a descent, or letting down. But since we were chosen in Christ "*before* the foundation of the world," let us joy with reverence over the priority of our original nature, and not confound ourselves with any of the products of time. We are clothed upon with temporal nature, but we are not children of time. We are fallen into time, but we are from eternity. From of old, God loved us with an everlasting love. There is

The Antiquity
of our final
humanity.

nothing in the world that represents to us either what we were, or what we shall be. Long before the geological eras began, long before the great chaotic age, and long before that first of all the sad changes, namely, the angel-fall, God beheld His final human race, perfect in His Son. Whatever we have become through the two great falls, in heaven, and in earth, in Christ Jesus we are the holy children of eternity. Our right home is in our Father's house, amid the first-born eternal glories. It is not strange, therefore, that there should be a spirit in us which refuses to rest in anything under the sun, as our final condition. That which was "elect and precious," before the foundation of the world, lingers in us. When we turn from ourselves to our Saviour, we turn to our true nature. Hence our rest. "Come to Me, I will give you rest." Hence our assured hope of ultimate perfection. "Christ in us" is the true and original seed of our glory.

Before any evil had taken place in heaven or earth, that we might not be permanently natured according to any fallen creation, God chose us in His Eternal Son. He is Integer, or Holy; and being chosen in Him, we are holy and without blame before God. We have derived much from the will of the flesh and from the will of man, from the world and from fallen spirits; but the whole history of our fall is but as a moment compared with our eternity in "the Prince of life," "the Lord of Glory." "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer." Are we not acquiring an altogether new appreciation of our eternal standing, which "for a little moment" we have lost! Are not our darkness, and our sadness, quickening and entendering the holy root that is in us? Through our prayers, griefs, and conflicts, is not our holiness putting on new strength? Do we not hate with perfect hatred, whatever in us is foreign to Divine Nature? Shall we not be gainers by our hatred? Do we not inly sigh to be "crucified with Christ," that the whole

body of sin in us may be destroyed, that so we may come again to the inheritance of our first perfection? When our sighing and sorrow have for ever ceased, shall we not carry in us a world of tenderness, and wear a beauty, which, apart from our experience of fallen nature, we should never have known? God's purpose to recover us and to make us holy, and our desire to be holy, are a strong working unity; and we shall surely be established in holiness before Him for ever.

But beware that you fall not into the hurtful conceit that God is a respecter of persons. "There is no iniquity with the Lord God, nor respect of persons." The testimony of scripture on this head is very full and decisive. Deut. x. 17; 2 Sam. xiv. 14; 2 Chron. xix. 7; Job xxxiv. 19; Rom. ii. 11; Gal. ii. 6; Eph. vi. 9; Col. iii. 25; 1 Pet. i. 17. As God has chosen no man's person, He has not chosen you rather than others. God has chosen That which from eternity was in His Son, in whomsoever That may be, or in whomsoever It may come to be. Strictly speaking, God has but One Elect, in Whom His soul delighteth. "He saith not, and to seeds as of many; but as of One, and to thy Seed, *which is Christ.*" This is the One and only Seed "to Whom the promise was made." "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him, Amen, unto the glory of God." The whole scope of God's election is in His Son. Boasting is excluded. No man can glory in himself; yet every man who knoweth the Lord may glory in Him, and in his election in Him. So far as your life is "hid with Christ in God," you are in the election of God. If you are not in the Son of God, you are in reprobation. Whoever abides in the nature and spirit of his own personality is reprobate. To reject Christ is to reject God's predestination. If we are made partakers of Christ, we are comprehended in eternal election. There is nothing arbitrary in it. The election of God is without variableness or the shadow of a turning, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever.

Therefore to preach Christ to every creature, is to declare to every creature, that through Christ Jesus he may make his

Our predestination is in Jesus Christ.

Gal. iii. 16.
Gal. iii. 19.

2 Cor. i. 20.

election sure. To whomsoever Christ is offered, as "the gift of God," to him the predestination, that was before all worlds, is offered. If God from eternity had elected to eternal life *certain persons* rather than other persons, it would be the coldest and most cruel mockery, after that, to "preach the gospel to every creature." It would be horrible to suppose that Christ, Who tasted death for every man, would have charged His apostles, after He was risen from the dead, to carry His gospel into all nations, and bring it home to every creature's door and heart, if He had not known that the election of God was open to every man.

Strive to
enter into
God's election.

But the creature must strive to enter in, saith the Lord, for "the gate is strait." In itself the gate is boundless and divinely attractive; but to the corruption of man's heart it is strait and forbidding. Strive to enter into God's election. Jacob, with tears, wrestled at the gate and he entered in. The cry, "Repent ye," is the goodness of God counselling men, to turn from that which has for ever been rejected, to that which has for ever been elect. And the joy of the angels over every sinner that repenteth, is their delight at seeing another immortal pass out of reprobation into eternal election. "Abide in me and I in you," said the Lord, otherwise you too will fall out of election into reprobation. For "if a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch." "Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." Therein, and therein only, is your election.

Jno. xv. 6.

The glory and
praise of
God's grace.

Ver. 6. "*To the praise of the glory of God's grace,*" "*He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*" And herein is God's praise, that He has not chosen any thing for man, which is changeable. The immutability of grace is its glory. There is one satisfaction which is even higher than that of our salvation, namely, that our salvation illustrates the glory, and exalts the praise of God's goodness. Who could take joy in his salvation, if it dishonoured God? But our salvation magnifies that which was eternally precious to God. The Spirit of His Son shed abroad in our hearts constitutes our acceptance. We are presented before God in the faultlessness of His

Beloved. "The grace of God which brings salvation" comes forth from the bosom of His glory, and qualifies us to live with Him in glory. Both in its origin and in its end, grace is glory. Before the foundation of the world, there was nothing but glory. When leaving the world, our Lord asked that His Humanity might be glorified with the Glory which He had before the world was. That is the glory, which now, as a hidden spirit of grace, is given to us. We were chosen in glory, unto glory. The Son of God is Glory. His Glory is the Father's eternal praise. We are going to reflect Jesus, the Beloved of the Lord, and to rejoice for ever before the face of our Father, "to the praise of the glory of His grace."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," which is in us, is at the same time in Him. It is never cut off from its source. Even as the daylight, which is in our eyes, is inseparable from the sun. The grace of God in the redeemed, and the Fountain of that grace are indissolubly one. The grace of God, which is in us, therefore, gives us a positive oneness with God. If we reject the grace which is brought nigh to us in Christ Jesus our Lord, we cut ourselves off at once from the election of God, and from our own glory. No grace, no glory. The more grace now, the more glory hereafter. Heaven prepares for Heaven. Christ in us, is a hidden heaven of joy and praise, preparing us for the eternal heaven of glory.

"In whom we have redemption through His blood." All things are double, like soul and body; and the blood of Christ has a double signification. He verily took part of the same flesh and blood with us; but in our blood, He could not be presented before the face of His Father. His experience in Adam's blood was an exceeding bitter cup. It clothed Him with our curse. He must shed that blood, otherwise the curse that lies upon the race cannot be put away. In that blood He never can be received up into heaven. It is a bar between Him and His own glory. And yet, now that He is in heaven, we are charged to drink His blood, for the remission of our sins and the purification of our souls. We must, therefore, understand the blood of Christ in two very distinct senses; as distinct as

The blood of
Christ,

the human life which expired on Calvary, and the human life which our Lord is now living in heaven. One blood He put away; the other is the blood of His own Divine and human life, which being drunk into our souls, cleanses us from all sin. "Drink ye all of It." I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.

—not physical.

The blood of communion between Christ and the members of His body, not being a physical thing, is never apprehended by the natural mind. The carnal mind understands all things carnally, yea, even "the blood of Christ." But His blood is most spiritual. "The Lord is that Spirit." His blood is His life. Drink It into your souls, "for the remission of your sins." Nothing less than the Divine Spirit-blood of the Son of God can purify a spirit. Whosoever drinketh the life of the Lord Jesus, is most surely undergoing a process of Divine cleansing. The prayer for salvation which the Lord puts into our mouth is, simply, "Deliver us from evil." For nothing but evil can separate any spirit from the favour of God and heaven. The remission of sin is therefore redemption. The Lord's blood is the remedy for all evil. It is Innocence itself, Purity itself: whoever drinks thereof, drinks death and life, death unto sin, and life unto God.

Forgiveness a
work of God.

The forgiveness of God is not in word, but in power. We forgive our fellow creature from without; but God's forgiveness is a work within the soul. The energy and purity of His Son's life affect the very springs of thought and feeling, lift the burden from the conscience, heal every sore, and pacify every fear of the spirit. The spirit of sin in our blood is a very near bewitching power, but the blood of Christ is a yet nearer, mightier power. The blood of Christ has a universal sovereignty. It is the power of God to salvation. It speaks peace throughout the soul; and it is done.

Such a deliverance from the virus of sin is indeed a most real "redemption." It is *God's* forgiveness: it is deeper than we can search it out. It accords with "the riches of His grace." It is more than a royal gift; it is a gift of royalty.

To be cleansed by His Son's blood, is to be new creatures in His blood. St. John speaks of our washing, and our royalty, in a single sentence. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath *made us kings*," &c. By one act God puts off from the soul the filthy garments of sin, and puts on the beauty of His Son. To put away winter from the face of the earth, and to put on summer is one operation.

Rev. i. 5, 6.

The fountain of grace which it hath pleased the Father to open for us in the life of His glorified Son, is essentially related to us, and always flowing towards us. In our nature He died for our sins, and in our nature He ever liveth to mediate forgiving and renewing grace unto the ends of the earth. "He is the Propitiation" not for the sins of the Church only, "but also for the sins of the whole world." The flow of His Human sympathy reacheth to every creature. The Eternal Father has in the man Christ Jesus, a propitious medium, corresponding with the inmost cravings of His Love. No one is wholly cut off from the outflow of the Mediator's heart. Noiselessly, ceaselessly, and every where throughout the world, the superabounding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is operating. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." He hath "power over all flesh." But His Power breathes on the soul with the gentleness of summer warmth; for He will do no violence to the freedom of any creature.

The ever-flowing blood of redemption.

1 John ii. 2.

The ways and motions of His Power are governed by His "*wisdom and prudence*." It is well for the human race that the Grace of God, in its final action, is not subject to the conceptions or methods of any man's wisdom, nor to the limits of human affection, nor even to the faith and love of the whole Church. In some respects human zeal exceeds God's wise and prudent method of grace; but in all respects it comes infinitely short of His purpose. Man understands not the wisdom of God's long delay, nor the prudence of His reserve. "He hath made the riches of His grace to abound towards us;" but all His "wisdom and prudence" are engaged in its

The "wisdom and prudence" of His grace.

administration. Neither men nor angels can survey the range of His grace, nor take account of the manifoldness of its operation.

By "all *prudence*" (φρόνησις) understand every method of the Divine thought. The prudentiality of the great Father's plan of procedure exceeds anything that we can comprehend. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts, saith the Lord." The sphere of the heavens is not a little greater, but immensely greater than that of the earth; but how much more do the methods of Divine grace transcend all human theories. Things which are impossible to men, are quite possible to God.

CHAP. I. 9, 10.—*Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself: 10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in One, all things in Christ, both the things which are in heaven, and the things which are on earth: even in Him.*

The original
purpose of
God.

The grace which God hath made to abound towards us, through His Son, is no deviation from His original plan. All along, before the days of Chaos, before the angels fell, and through all the celestial and terrestrial ages, God carried in His bosom a certain purpose, called "the mystery of His will." He always meant that His creatures should undergo a long, patient, and manifold experience before He disclosed His central plan. The Incarnation of His Son, and His Mediatorial relationships are strictly the carrying out of the design, which, before the beginning of His works, He had "purposed in Himself." That His creatures should be both related to Him, and mutually related, in the closest bonds, and that those bonds should be inviolable, were always His will. He knew that His children, each of whom would have an individual will, could only be saved from ceaselessly falling into disorder, by

being brought into direct conjunction with Himself. But this strong and perfect unity between God and "all things," though His first ideal purpose, can only be realized as the last estate of the creation.

From time immemorial the universe, from its centre to its utmost circumference, has been a house of division. Spirits are opposed to spirits, wills to wills, thoughts to thoughts, elements to elements. The discrepancy between heaven and earth is an immense trial. Every one that comes into the world is at times oppressed and confounded by the dismal break between the two human homes. Add to this, the awful division between heaven and hell, and you must see that the Cross of God is both a greater and more ancient cross than any of us can comprehend. Opposed to God and His holy heavens, are very powerful apostate heavens. So far as we know, the battle is universal. The hostility between thrones and thrones, powers and powers, is bitter in the extreme. Could they do it, the rebellious heavens would change the whole of the primitive heavens, and the Son of God Himself, into their own image and likeness. God has been labouring hitherto to subdue evil unto good; but the evil powers have also been labouring to transmute good into evil. For to them good is evil, and evil good.

The strife and division of the universe.

Let it be borne in mind that hell is not only a lost heaven, but a very great loss to heaven. Europe would not be a little loss to the world. But there is no reason to suppose that the powers of hell bear a smaller proportion to those of heaven than Europe does to the world. Hell is an apostacy of stupendous magnitude. Its fierce passions and disorders not only affect our souls, but permeate the whole creation. Nature, throughout all her kingdoms, bears testimony to a universal strife, and inspired Seers bear witness to "war in heaven." The prince-angel who was the direct messenger of God to Daniel, said that he should have been with him three weeks sooner, had he not been powerfully resisted. "From the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words; but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood

Hell, a serious loss to Heaven.

Dan. x. 12, 13,
20.

me one and twenty days; but lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me. . . . And now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia." Our Lord testifies likewise that the powers, signified by Satan and the devil, are ceaselessly working in opposition to Him. He is seeking the lost that He may save them; and the powers of hell are seeking to deceive and destroy them. "Satan that deceiveth the whole world," is the determined and relentless enemy of "the Saviour of the world."

Since her loss, Heaven has never been the Heaven that she was before. Nor can she rest in the present condition of things. Neither God nor Heaven will rest till the great mischief is repaired. It will be more than repaired. Ultimately, Heaven will be richer in might, and in wisdom, and in glory, than she was in the first days of her unity.

The material
universe?

But this strange thing, called the material universe, which hides the face of God's glory, and all truth, from us, what is it? Is it not an organized shadow of all that it conceals, namely, the strife between fallen and unfallen spiritual powers? Is it not strictly hieroglyphical of the great battle between heaven and hell? It is neither heaven nor hell; neither wholly good, nor wholly evil; neither in accord, nor hopelessly at variance with God. It is very anomalous. It is an enigma to all who think. In a certain qualified sense, it is a mirror of God; and yet no one can deny that it is one vast organized battle-field of contending forces. In many respects it represents heaven; but in other, and manifold respects it just as faithfully represents hell. We call it Nature, *natura*, that which is becoming, or about to be. It is something which was not; and yet is; and yet is not as it would be, nor as it shall be. We call her *mother* too, for she is in sore travail; and will expire some day in bringing forth the new heavens and the new earth, wherein God's truth and righteousness shall be seen again. Dying she will not die. Through her final redemptive new birth, she will put off all her vanity and put on the glory of God, her strife will cease, and her peace be eternal.

She labours in corruption and sorrow because she has lost certain essential qualities. It is not enough that she represents some of the principles of God's Nature, she must embody and represent all, and all in unity, in order to realize the glorious and permanent form of her being. The restlessness and vanity which are inseparable from her present constitution, are but her expressive way of confessing: "I am wanting: I am waiting for my re-birth: I was not always subject to vanity, nor am I now subject thereto willingly: I groan in hope: I shall be delivered from my strife and sorrow: I shall be whole and perfect: my bondage will issue in glorious liberty: my divisions will be broken up and solved into an ever-enduring unity."

It is most essential to heaven, that the material universe should be brought into perfect harmony with it; and it is just as essential to the peace and glory of the material universe that it should become harmonious with heaven. Neither can be complete without the other. "*As it is in heaven, so on earth.*" Is not this sweet equilibrium between the material and the spiritual, and between both and God, precisely the mystery of His will "which from everlasting He purposed in Himself?"

The unity
that is to be.

"God hath spoken," saith St Peter, "by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began," of the issue to which He will bring temporal nature. To the mind and heart of God "the restitution of all things" is not less, but even more necessary than was their first creation. Through the strife and disorder of nature, including the contrarieties of our own flesh and spirit, the Name of God is involved in clouds and darkness. As Jesus, in our flesh, was covered with humiliations and reproaches, so is God by the conflicts and sorrows of the creation. Christ endured the contradictions of sinners against Himself, and God from age to age endures the contradictions of nature against Himself. For His own glory, it is absolutely necessary that God should deliver His creation from its corruption, its vanity, its cruel strifes; and establish it in an order worthy of His wisdom, and in a steadfast

The burden
of prophecy.
Acts iii. 21.

blessedness worthy of His love. We see not yet all things established in such order and joy. But we see Jesus as the Head of the restored creation, "crowned with glory and honour." He brought His Divine Nature under the humble and painful conditions of temporal nature, that He might raise her to her glorious condition, and establish her therein. In Himself, the purpose of God is fulfilled, and the end foreshown. He sits a King upon His throne, subduing all things to Himself; and when He has put down all adverse rule, authority, and power, and made all things new, then will the clouds and darkness, which have so long obscured the face of God, be rolled away, and the plan "which He purposed in Himself," before the foundation of the world, be fulfilled.

Ignorance of
the natural
mind.

Students of nature, in general, seem to take no account of the serious reproaches under which she works and travails. They appear to find no difficulty in supposing that the visible creation accords with the nature and will of God. Well has Christ said—"O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." Men *assume* that the present warring, sorrowing creation is according to God, because they neither know God, "nor the mystery of His will." Would you not pity British statesmen who should confound a convict settlement, or a reformatory, with her Majesty's household? And if they perpetually assumed that the "all things" of such establishments, reflected her Majesty's heart and character, would you not say that it argued either incapacity of judgment, or perverseness of heart? But such an assumption would be a very trifling error, compared with that of regarding the condition and working of temporal nature as harmonious with the Nature and character of God. The fierce antagonisms of nature represent something very foreign from the unity of God. Nature is one great cry for Christ's reconciliation.

To believers in Revelation, the rudeness and cruelty of many of nature's laws and operations, occasion no difficulty. God has made known to them the secret of her humiliation, and the beauty of His final purpose.

In the meantime the Cross of Universal Nature lies on

the Son of God. However fallen it may be, how can He divest Himself of that which He has once made? If "all things were created by Him, and for Him, and by Him all things consist," He must be the centre of all the discord. Lines from the whole circumference must meet in Him. "The Lord hath made the iniquity of us all to meet in Him," is no exceptional truth. It is the revelation of an inevitable law. All evil meets in Him.

The great
Cross of the
Son of God.

Col. i. 16, 17.

Isa. liii. 6.

It was fitting therefore, that He should be *manifested*, as the Centre of all Conflict, the Bearer of all Sin. "It became Him" to clothe Himself with a body taken from struggling nature, that He might reveal Himself both as the Sufferer and the Healer. By bearing, He vanquished the curse. By direct encounters with them, He overcame all the evil powers.

Even for Him, the conflict was fearful. Indeed, no conceptions of ours can ever do justice to the sufferings of our God, Messiah. For as no creature can ever be the centre of all evil, no one can possibly have any idea of the magnitude and bitterness of Christ's woe. As man, it was necessary that He should experience the whole force of evil, and prevail. For man being the head of creation, nothing can be redeemed, until he is redeemed. But his redemption is virtually nature's redemption. The reconciliation which our Lord has effected has bearings as wide as creation. The whole creation will be restored, and inherit with man, the peace and glory of Christ. Evil struggles and will yet struggle, but it is doomed. Christ's death will be fulfilled in the death of evil throughout all nature. His ascension will be fulfilled in the universal diffusion of His Life, Love, and Glory. But He will not make haste. By His long patience, He gives the utmost possibility to the endeavours of evil. In the end, evil powers will work their own confusion and downfall. The Son of God is sure of final victory. He foresees it. The whole field will come about to Him. He will wait for it. In His ascension, all the elements and powers of nature are already glorified. In Him, they have all come back to God, with increase. They are no longer divided and striving. They underwent their grand decisive

Peace is made,
and will grow
to Universal
Empire.

and bloody sweat in Him. The worst is past. "The restitution of all things" is certain. All things are at Peace in Christ, and the Peace is wonderful.

"It is finished," proclaimed the end of the fallen order of nature. "He is risen," announced the beginning of the new order. Christ glorified is God's first-fruits of the whole harvest of His recovered creation. All things will be made after the pattern of Christ's unity. The reconciliation of all things in Him is very Divine. And when the like reconciliation is fulfilled, both in man and nature, the work of the Mediator will be done, and "the mystery of God finished."

If we reckon the duration of the Universe by ages, it is doubtless incalculably old; but if we contemplate it in the light of God's Eternity, it is comparatively young. Like a child who has not yet the full use of his powers, it has had many a slip and fall; but it is slowly, surely, advancing towards its perfect age, and will be steadfast in its perfectness. We are already at the beginning of God's decreed end. He has opened that with which His heart travailed, "before the worlds began."

The mystery of God's will is no longer a 'hidden mystery.' There are depths in it, which no thought can fathom, and heights, which no imagination can reach, but it is an open mystery. Angels and men are looking into it, and will look, with an ever-growing intensity of interest. For they see therein, as in a glass, the universe as it is to be,—a mirror of the Great Father's unity and love.

Observe once for all, that whoever speaks merely of the redemption of mankind, mutilates the redemption of God, and is unfaithful to the New Testament. The mystery of God's will and purpose, which Paul commends to us, is the knitting into unity, the gathering together in one, of "*all things* in Christ, both *the things* which are in heaven, and *the things* which are on earth; even in Him." The Headship of Christ is universal. Heaven and Earth, and "all things" therein, are to be brought under One Head; and thus into the Fellowship of a Divinely-balanced harmony. The whole course of sin and sorrow is His chastisement, which He will bear until it melts into His own Purity and Peace.

Our faith in Christ, ought to correspond with the purpose of God, by Christ. It should be an enlightened, and a glowing appreciation of God's Plan of perfecting the universe. Faith in Christ is not more essential to human hope, than to right reason. There are some striking evidences in our own time of the penalty which men already suffer for their unbelief. Men who think themselves very superior to the notions of the vulgar, prefer to classify man with the ape, rather than with the Son of God. Faith in Christ is strictly faith in the wondrous fulness, grandeur, and possibility of Humanity. There is but One in the universe in Whom are comprised "all things in heaven, and all things in earth ;" and that One, is the Man, Christ Jesus, the Hope and Glory of men. Man is "Lord, to the glory of God the Father," for He is Universal Reconciler, "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

CHAP. I. 11-14.—*In whom also we [Jews] have obtained an inheritance, (or, were portioned out our lot), being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted [hoped] in Christ. 13 In Whom ye [Gentiles] also [hoped] after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which [Spirit] is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, [the possession which has been acquired for us] unto the praise of His glory.*

All Jews did not reject the Messiah. We Jews, says Paul, were the first to hope in Christ, and to obtain our part in the new inheritance. We were the first to exchange "the old man," for "the new man," the old creation, for the new hope. And this was strictly according to the purpose of God. "Having drawn out all things from the very first, according to the perfect counsel of His own will, He had no need of after plans." In no least particular, will He ever have to make a shadow of deviation from His eternal counsel. His creatures

Jews, the first
believers in
Christ.

therefore can only find their perfect rest on one condition: they must change, and change, and change again, until they come into their lot, according to His first plan. For the perfection of the whole depends upon the perfection of all the parts, and the perfect relationship of all the parts. It was necessary that the Gospel should first be preached to the Jews, for their deliverance from the thoughts and prejudices of ages: that they might be "a kind of first-fruits," of all generations, "to the praise of God's glory." How can the people of any nation, or age, be "to the praise of His glory," unless they suffer themselves to be delivered from their old limits of thought? God is as clearly calling Christians, as, in "Follow me," a former age, He called Jews, out of their old limits into broader places. If Christians cannot leave their crude conceptions, and go on with God, He will go on without them. For men have not yet come to the recognition of the whole purpose of God in Christ Jesus. Whoever, therefore, abides by his own, or his forefathers' stereotyped conceptions, may be a worshipper of Christ's tomb, but he has parted company with the Living Christ. "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead." Of all men, the Jews were proudest of their nation, their nationality, and history; it was therefore only by the noblest self-conquest, that they were made to testify, that henceforth "there is neither Jew nor Gentile," but that all men are one in Christ Jesus. In making Jews the first preachers of Christ, it was demonstrated that Christ is a greater Power than nationality, and a greater attraction than all the divinest things in the past.

Christ is the
Christ of all
nations.

The Christ of God is neither buried, nor contained, in any past. The angels are crying aloud to Christendom: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" Christ is in the mouth and heart of all nations. In Him, all nations are one new nature. He is coming to the nations, not from the tombs of the long past, but from Heaven. The breath which in all nations is kindling a desire to be loosed from the oppressive bonds of ages, that they may go free, in the warmer, broader, Truth of God's grace, is Christ's presence with the nations. We quote Peter's words, not to express what was once true,

for they are equally applicable to our own age : Jesus " being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Jesus Christ is stealing upon the nations to lead them by new expanses of thought, and richer liberties, towards the greatness of their hope.

Acts ii. 33.

When Jesus was born, certain mariners, sailing in the Ægean Sea, are said to have heard a voice echoing among the rude islands : " Great Pan is dead." And it is undeniable, that nature-gods many, and lords many, after a short struggle, did give up the contest and leave whole regions to Christ. Multitudes of the Heathen were translated from nature, and her light, into the new kingdom of the Son of God, and its marvellous light. Great was their joy, to find themselves delivered from the degradations of naturalism, with all its " dimness of anguish," and restored to the original kingdom of their divine humanity. They had been perplexed and confounded by fables ; but now the Truth was come. Gross darkness had covered them ; but the True Light was come at last, the glory of the Lord was risen upon them. Is it not strange that so late in the day of Grace, many among us are emulous of returning to what the Heathen abandoned long, long ago ? Having been touched by the charm of Christ's Humanity, and stolen certain beams of His Light, they have returned to the gourd-temple of their ' Great God Pan.' They have no objection to a quasi-Christian lamp in their temple ; but their Christ must be under nature, and not greater than nature. For the supernatural, they have no patience. They cannot conceive that nature, as they recognise her, is in an anti-natural condition ; and that the supernatural condition of Christ, is True Nature restored. We should perhaps charge their infidelity on the Church. O believers, had you walked in the heavenly beauty of the Son of God ; had you breathed His Spirit ; had your characters borne witness to the transforming power of His Life ; instead of presenting your own thought-images, and forms of death, to the people, had you lifted up The Living Christ, many who are now against you, would have

" Great Pan is dead."

A strange thing.

been on your side. You have sullied the glory of God's Truth. You have enveloped her fair face in the chilly mists of your unloving souls; and repelled many an ardent lover, by your misrepresentations. Not being able to accept your cold and arbitrary dogmas for God's Truth, they have forsaken The Church, to see what they can find under nature's sky. You have perverted your way; you have substituted definitions, and frozen forms, for life. And your sons have too much health, and honesty, to say that they believe your garnished sepulchres represent God's Christ, and the whole circle of living good.

The Living
Truth of
to-day is the
Christ.

Jno. xiv. 6.
Rev. i. 18.
Rev. iii. 21.
Jno. xvi. 15.
Matt. xxviii.
28.

Know you not that the Living Truth of to-day, is the Christ? Say not that “The Truth” is one of His Names. Christ is one of His Names; but “The Truth” is what He *was*, and what He *is*, and what He *will be* for ever. “I am The Truth.” “I am He that liveth.” “I overcame, and am set down with My Father, in His throne.” “All things that the Father hath are Mine.” “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” The Eternal Father could set upon His throne no other King than “The Truth.”

“The Gospel
of our Salva-
tion” is the
Word of
Truth.

According to Paul, “the Gospel of our salvation,” and “the Word of Truth,” are one and the same thing. God could never provide, or send, any other Gospel into the world, than The Word of Truth. Because it is “The Word of Truth,” there is “everlasting strength” in it, and it may be wholly trusted. We are required to believe it, because it is the revelation of God's unchangeable Truth. Being truth, the more implicitly we trust it, the more it will strengthen and support us. It is “the Power of God,” because it is the Word of His Truth. It is both older and truer than any creation which mortal eyes have seen, or can see. It is right that we should be commanded to believe in the Gospel of our salvation, rather than in the things which are seen. For “the things which are seen are temporal;” but the sweet harmony of Truth, revealed to us in Jesus Christ, is Divine, and Eternal. The things which are seen are not absolutely true to God, and therefore, “as a vesture, Thou shalt fold them up, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall

not fail." As children of temporal nature, our countenance is soon changed, and we pass away; but being born again of the Truth of God, we have Everlasting Life. "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is The Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you." Heb. i. 12.

Nothing could justify us, in accepting a salvation which was not according to Truth. Salvation would be no salvation, if it were not by The Word of Truth. We should need to be saved from Christ, if He were not "The Truth." 1 Pet. i. 25.

Hence the Spirit of God, not only witnesses that Christ Jesus is the revelation of Eternal Truth, but that true believers, in virtue of their being at one with Him, are the legitimate sons, and heirs of God. "Of His own will begat He us, *with The Word of Truth*, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures." They are sealed with the Holy Spirit, because they are in the Truth. For the Holy Spirit is "The Spirit of Truth," and will witness to nothing but The Truth. Believers are sealed.
Jas. i. 18.

"*After that ye believed, ye were sealed.*" Call it sealing, or what you will, it is a fact that believers in Christ, of every age, have enjoyed an inward, filial assurance, of which we certainly hear nothing from the mere students of nature. It is well known, moreover, that the more sharply the believer's confidence has been tried, the more steadfast and triumphant it has become. How is it to be accounted for, that nature does not seal her disciples in the same way? They do not possess the restful certitude, and the joyous hope, of believers. Why do they not? Let others answer this question as they may, we answer: The Holy Spirit will not testify that nature has "The Word of Truth," namely, "The Gospel of our Salvation; nor will He assure the disciples of nature that they are the children and heirs of God." "*The testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.*" "When He, the Spirit of Truth is come." . . . "*He shall glorify Me.*" Rev. xix. 10.
Jno. xvi. 13, 14.

"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God,—every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come

in the flesh is not of God.” . . . Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error.” “*We are in Him that is True*, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the True God and Eternal life.” Believers, then, are “sealed with the Holy Spirit,” for no other reason, than that they are *in The Truth*. Temporal nature is a division,—only a part of that which is perfect. Christ is unity.

The men who believe in the results of scientific observation, rather than in “the Gospel of our Salvation,” will discover some day that they, and “The Truth,” are on opposite sides. They are the disciples of nature’s facts, but at variance with Truth, in its Eternal Form. Moreover, as the only enduring, and all-controlling Power, must be God’s Truth, they will sooner, or later, find it to be a very unhappy thing, to stand opposed to the supreme governing Power of the universe and eternity.

“The earnest
of our Inheri-
tance.”

“The Spirit of Truth” dwelling in the hearts of those who believe The Truth, is “*the earnest*” of their full inheritance. An earnest is a payment in part, as a pledge of the whole hereafter. The Spirit of God is a noble earnest, but not our full possession. What manner of inheritance must that needs be, of which The Holy Spirit is but the first deposit? God has not described it. For language has fallen as much as men, and is unfitted to be the vehicle of heavenly things. From one partial and hasty vision of our inheritance, Paul says: (being in danger of self-exaltation from the abundance of revelations “which were given to him,) that a life-long affliction was laid upon him. All that he is able, or permitted, to say of these revelations, is: “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, who was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him.”

2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.

Isa. lxiv. 4.
“The pur-
chased
possession.”

But our inheritance, the earnest of which we have in our hearts, is a “*purchased* [acquired] *possession*.” We are plainly

told therefore that what formerly belonged to others has been acquired for us. And as the things recorded in Old Testament history, are said to be types of higher things, we should perhaps regard the conquest of Canaan by Joshua as a shadow of the acquisition of our Divine Joshua. “ Now all these things happened to them for ensamples.” The Christian Church has indeed always assumed that Canaan is a type of the final inheritance of redeemed mankind. Moreover the whole celestial sphere and kingdom, which were the possession of Satan and his angels, and which by transgression they lost, must be inherited. Is not this the very inheritance which the Son of God, as Man, has acquired for men? If so, we can understand in what sense the kingdom of Heaven has all along “ suffered violence.” “ We wrestle against principalities, against powers. . . . in heavenly places.” We are besiegers. We need divine armour. We need invincibility of will. The Strength of the King of Glory in us, is our invincibility. Is it likely that the original inhabitants of the heavenly Canaan, the thrones and powers, with all their multitudes, would allow themselves quietly to be supplanted by the race of man? They knew that Jesus was the Son of God, come in the flesh, as the Captain of our salvation, and yet they assailed Him with every form of subtle temptation, and to the very last, sought to overwhelm Him by the powers and terrors of darkness. But He spoiled their principalities and powers, triumphing over them, in our nature. The Lord our God went before us, and subdued the Satanic Canaanites, seven nations greater and mightier than we, and acquired their inheritance for us. If “ the angels that sinned ” were those of the highest heavens,—the first of all the Father’s children, and the nearest to Him, (which from every view of the character and the history of evil is most probable), it follows as a matter of course, that Christ, in His ascension, would leave all the inhabited heavens far behind Him.

1 Cor. x. 11.

Col. ii. 15.

But after our Lord’s entrance into “ the acquired possession,” much remained to be done, “ I go to *prepare a place* for you.” The possession is acquired, but all the authority and power of

the enemy are not yet put down. Defeat after defeat awaits them, and beyond all, the final defeat, after which they shall neither have place, nor power, "in high places." But the race which they deceived and ruined shall possess the inheritance for ever. "Speak not thou in thy heart after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land : but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee." "O the depth ! Behold the goodness and severity of God. How unsearchable are His judgments."

Deut. ix. 4.

Rom. xi. 22,
33.

II.

PAUL'S PRAYER ON BEHALF OF HIS FELLOW BELIEVERS.

CHAP. I. 15-23.

CHAP. I. 15-18.—*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers : 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the [full] knowledge of Him : 18 The eyes of your heart [τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν] being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints.*

No one who knows what faith and love are, according to the New Testament, will ever doubt that they are the most human of all our capacities. They are distinct, yet essentially one. They are significant signs of our vast future. Give yourself to history, to geology, astronomy, physiology, chemistry, and you will correspondingly inform and expand your mind.

Faith and Love—immense affections.

But by faith, your spirit is at one with the wisdom and goodness, the power and glory, the infinity and eternity of God. Faith involves, therefore, the utmost enlargement of soul, and yet begets nothing like self-exaltation. We say nothing of nominal believers ; but minds which are in actual sympathy with the Son of God, are in the condition to become the master-minds of the universe. Nor can any one doubt this, who understands the scope of God's purpose in Christ Jesus.

Master-minds.

It is not possible that "the power of God, and the wisdom of God," should establish their empire in certain men, without constituting them "kings and priests unto God." The elements of essential precedency and power are rooted and grounded in them. By selfish thoughts of the Gospel, as of a plan by which we are to be saved from misery and hell, we spoil it of its Divine glory. The gospel of God comprehends higher and broader reaches of thought, than any subject ever opened to the minds of angels, or men. Compared with the work of Christ, all the thoughts which this visible earth and heaven are capable of stirring in us, are divisive, and very superficial. Pioneers of this and the other physical science, flatter themselves that they are pre-eminently, the sons of wisdom. Were they not already blinded through their own conceit, they might be assured that they are often pitied for their shallowness and puerility. In their own esteem they are exclusively the students of science, but the truth is, they are only gatherers of old clothes, and classifiers of fragments. By their own confession they know nothing of life: their whole survey is confined to the outer rind of things. With respect to the supreme science, they are but intellectual moles and bats, or, as fish of their own pond, they do not know that their pond cuts them off from the true Life-Ocean. Men who eschew "faith in the Lord Jesus," and whose sole study is the material universe, are precisely such fish. Perambulating their limits, they *assume* that they are surveying the circuit of God's truth. There is really no more relation between their whole scientific survey, and God's Truth, than between a stagnant duck pond and the ethereal ocean, which far above the atmosphere of our planet, holds its calm empire undisturbed by our nether clouds and currents. Nothing beyond physical phenomena can ever come under the observation of the physical senses; and therefore the whole sum of scientific data can have but partial and oblique relations to the sphere of God's Eternal Truth. And yet there are in every age a certain number of men, of the mundane and prone species, who persist in regarding the rising day of the intellect in Christ, as

a fond conceit, and who would even supplant the Sun of Truth, by their own murky experience. They are God's lunatics, protesting that they are at large and free, while not their mortal bodies only, but their very minds, are immured in the jail of their own materialism. Christ would lead them out of their prison-house, into the Light of God; but they will not be led by Him. Except to themselves, their vaunted positivism has in it nothing positive. It is essentially a puerile folly. The highest powers of their own nature are sunk into a dead sleep, under the one-sided development of their minds; and yet they have the weakness and rashness to assume that this one-sided experience of theirs is the test of Truth. Time was when the Saurians had their positivism in this planet. Their Saurian experience was *to them* the scope of Truth. But the Saurians and their experience have become obsolete; and human minds darkened by their own wisdom, will run out their little day, and sink under the great night. Could they believe it, faith in the Incarnation of the Eternal Logos, would open to their range, boundless fields, not of misteaching facts, but of immutable Truth. From Him, they might derive the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God," which is the intelligence of faith, the only right human intelligence.

2. Cor. iv. 6.

The noble-mindedness of faith is always associated with a corresponding noble-heartedness. Faith and Love are inseparable bosom-companions. I constantly thank God, writes Paul, for your faith and love. "Your faith" is a divine expansiveness given to your understanding, and "your love unto all the saints" is a like vastness given to your affections. They are the double suns of your soul, sun within sun. Whole galaxies of wisdom are comprehended in faith, as in a mental firmament. And as to the new spirit of Love, which is Faith's associative soul, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." "Wherefore, I cease not to give thanks for you," that the goodness and the greatness which are everlasting are made sure to you. Your faith and love are of unknown value. They constitute your initiation into an

Noble-mindedness and noble-heartedness make one.

1 Jno. iv. 16.

endless progress. Infinite truth is the scope of your mind; and infinite love, the scope of your heart.

Paul prays, therefore, that his converts may not rest in their first crude knowledge of God and the gospel. But he knew that in no other way could they grow in Divine knowledge, than by receiving a "spirit of wisdom and revelation" from God. "In my prayers" for you, I ask "that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him."

With wonder and thankful joy let us muse on the fact, that by our "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," we have become the children of "*the Father of Glory*." All beauty has one source; all light has one Father. The glory of the holy angels, and the glory which is above the heavens, proceed from one Father. The glory of heaven is but a mild reflection. "The brightness of His Glory," in its immutable and tranquil sweetness, shines only in the face of "His only begotten Son."

"The spirit of wisdom" is the "*Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus"; and the spirit of "revelation" is the *light of that life*. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." The heart in man is the organ of the life, and the understanding, the organ of the light of the Son of God. If God gave to us "the spirit of revelation," apart from the wisdom which delights in doing His will, we should be puffed up, rather than built up. "Godly edifying" is better for us than the knowledge of mysteries. Paul's idea of order, therefore, is that wisdom should precede knowledge. Where heavenly wisdom is, heavenly knowledge will surely come to be. But Balaam's eyes may be open, and he may utter marvels from a spirit of revelation, and yet be very far from being a wise man. His revelations are good and true, but *he* is double-minded, and therefore, neither right with God, nor just to himself. If in meekness and lowliness of heart, you are rather seeking purity than mysteries; and withal, if you desire not so much your own fame, as to be of service to God and your fellow-creatures, God has given to you "the spirit of wisdom." And

Paul's prayer
for his
converts.

ver. 27.

"The Spirit
of wisdom and
revelation."

in due time, as it is safe and profitable for you, He will give you the spirit of revelation, for a deeper knowledge of divine secrets. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." In the cross and death of Christ, in the ascension which follows His death, and in the Pentecost which is consequent upon His ascension, every human and Divine riddle is expounded. But the mysteries are veiled, no natural mind can discern them; "but the wise shall understand."

Ps. xxv. 14.
Jno. vii. 17.

Paul's phrase, "the eyes of your heart being enlightened," teaches us that spiritual discernment is not given to the intellect, but to renewed hearts. As the affections purify, the understanding becomes "light in the Lord." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." In His light they see light.

The "eyes of
the heart."

Not without "the spirit of wisdom and revelation" directly from God Himself, shall we ever know "what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." Believers in Christ have a "calling" peculiar to themselves. Other things affect them partially and for moments; "the high calling of God" alone obtains the assent and consent of their whole nature. Their "hope in Christ" is not a mere idea: it is their leading passion, it absorbs them. And what wonder? since God Himself contemplates with joy the glorious riches of His human inheritance. This is the peculiar possession, which He foresaw, and upon which He set His heart, before the foundation of the world. Spirits who have fallen, and are recovered, are singularly God's own inheritance: even as they intensely and peculiarly inherit the depth and fulness of God. Has not "The Father of Glory," "riches of glory," which angels have never yet illustrated or embodied? Is it not appointed to redeemed man, to bring out to view the hidden things of God? If there be one kingdom destined more strikingly to manifest the riches of God's glory, than any other, it must be that which was prospectively given to His Son before the world began, as the crown of His humilia-

The Father's
peculiar
inheritance.

Heb. xii. 2.

tion, and the reward of His suffering. Our Lord Himself meditated this recompense in the day of His grief. "*For the joy that was set before Him*, He endured the Cross." The Cross-Bearer is now drawing forth the very depths of God, and embodying them in the kingdom that is growing about His throne. In the nature of things, therefore, this kingdom is the Father's peculiar inheritance. There being in it more of Himself, it is fitly predestinated to be the instrument of His right hand, by which He will establish the universe in permanent order, teach heaven profounder wisdom, and fulfil all His pleasure.

Our future
standing in the
kingdom of
the Son of
God.

Paul might well pray that by a spirit of revelation, God would grant us to know "*what is the hope of His calling.*" Had we a vivid perception of the riches of God's glory, which as members of His Son's Body, we are called to possess and display, it could not fail to be very influential in the spirit of our life, and the formation of our characters. Moses "refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's daughter," because "he had respect unto the recompense of the reward," in the ultimate human kingdom. Whatever "the treasures in Egypt" might be, he saw that, in the service of Christ, he could win for himself "greater riches." It was his clear discernment of superior riches which induced him to resign his prospects in Egypt. "*By faith,*" Moses refused, &c., &c. "Now faith is the evidence of things not seen." Suppose, as believers, we foresaw more clearly our future offices, ministries, and honours:—suppose, that, by "the spirit of revelation," we had a positive discernment of the posts of high influence and service which we are to occupy in the future organization and government of the universe:—would not "the hope of our calling," steadfastly held in view, operate as a powerful defence against the absorbing spirit of this present world? Would it not give a peculiar charm and dignity to our bearing in the present life, if we habitually contemplated ourselves as future "kings and priests unto God," in His eternal empire? Faith in an unseen kingdom of rewards has always been a mighty, persuasive, and controlling power. If it be not so with us, it ought to be a sign to us that our faith is in name only. Were we daily thinking about,

Heb. xi. 24-27.

and asking for, the things which would best qualify us for service in our final Home-kingdom, it would help us to shew a noble reserve in relation to the petty interests and excitements of the passing day. All earnest students, at our schools and universities, know that they have an opportunity of acquiring future distinction in the world; and the members of the Church of Christ should as certainly know, that they have their opportunity of qualifying themselves for preferment in His Eternal Kingdom. It is certain that high offices in immediate connection with the throne and government of God, will fall to the lot of the disciples of Christ. Otherwise there were no meaning in their being distinctively called "the Body of Christ," and the Father's special inheritance. Indeed, our Lord's teaching is very emphatic, as to the future honours of His faithful disciples. "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over His household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when He cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that *He shall make him ruler over all His goods.*" "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, Who called His own servants, and delivered to them His goods. . . . After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, Thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold I have gained beside them five talents more. His Lord said unto him, "Well done thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, *I will make thee ruler over many things.*" Our Lord plainly asserts that the capacity for future distinction in His kingdom is acquired now. Your reward, both in kind and amount, will be governed by your present service. To the disciple who exhibits a tenfold increase upon what he received, His Lord says: "*Have thou authority over ten cities.*" To him who shews a fivefold increase, He says: "*Have thou authority over five cities.*" It is during the absence of the king, that His servants acquire the qualifications which will crown them with

Matt. xxiv.
45, 47.

Matt. xxv.
14-21.

Luke xix.
12-19.

distinction at His return. The wiser, the humbler, the more diligent and useful His servants are, behind His back, the greater will be their power and glory, before His face, when "the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his work."

Matt. xvi. 27.

CHAP. I. 19-23.—*And what is the exceeding greatness of His Power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His Mighty Power, 20 Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, 23 Which is His Body, the Fulness of Him which filleth all in all.*

Continuation
of the prayer
for believers.

There is little in the present appearance or condition of believers, to encourage the idea, that they are to be raised to the highest rank of creatures. The thought of their being not only an order of "kings unto God" but the supreme order, will be treated with contempt. If the men of this world despised the Master of the house, how much more shall they scorn them of His household. Paul's prayer implies that no one will be able to imagine the future rank and glory of the redeemed, unless he is specially taught by "the spirit of revelation" from God. Therefore he not only asks "The Father of Glory" to reveal to the disciples of His Son, what will be their future distinction; but to exalt their conception of the Power which is working in them, to qualify them for the dominion and service to which they are appointed. No one doubts the greatness of God's Power; but who has just or worthy thoughts of "the exceeding greatness of His Power to us-ward who believe?" Faith opens the gate to the manifes-

Another effect
of the Spirit
of illumina-
tion.

tation of the Divine Power in the Soul. If this gate be shut, God is restrained in His working. The noblest powers of the man are buried as in their sepulchre. In the believer's soul these powers are wakened into activity, and in them God is working mightily. He is creating all things new, but so silently and secretly, that only He knows, and He alone can reveal the work which He is doing. Those who have the highest degree of illumination, do but see through a glass darkly, when contemplating the interior changes which are being wrought in them, "from glory to glory," by the working Power of God. Consider the secret power which moves in the husky seed-germ, until it springs sky-ward, spreading out its leafy surface to the sun. Watch your household bulb becoming a breathing, exhaling flower. Watch the unsightly worm, until you see it become a golden sylph, and exchange the earth for the freedom of the atmosphere. Or watch the light as it comes issuing out of any dark body. Then ask yourself, To what do all these transformations point? Are they not hints of the wonder-work of God in our dark, earthly souls? If seeds and worms undergo such changes, into what forms of light and beauty will God transform His believing children?

The Power that is working in them is not a weaker power, nor another power, but the Same Power, as that which wrought in the crucified and entombed Body of our Lord. Paul sends us to that chamber in the rock, for our chief lesson. There lies the mangled and bloodless body. A lance has been thrust through His heart: not a drop of blood remains therein. Watch, and you shall see God's own illustration of His Power and working in all believers. By nature, we are as sepulchres in which our immortal nature lies in death. Only God can raise us from the dead. Year by year He raises nature from the dead, but He hides His great power under a veil of surprising gentleness. The effects are seen, but we see not the power working. Even so Jesus rose from the dead. There was neither stir nor voice in that tomb. God filled that lifeless form, as the spring warmth fills the trees, swells their buds,

Go into
Christ's tomb
for an illus-
tration of the
Power which
is working
in us.

and opens them into leaf. Jesus rose as quietly as a flower lifts its head to the dawn. Calmly, and as free from excitement, as one awaking from sleep, He left the sepulchre. The linen that was about His body, bore witness to His calm self-possession. A leisurely hand had folded it up. Such is the Godlike way in which death is destroyed by a Power greater than death, and the light of immortality kindled in man. Man is saved. The power that moves in the tree, moves in the branches too. "I am the vine, you are the branches." His new life-warmth is in us. Christ liveth in us. The diffusion of His ascension through our souls, is as much a fact as the diffusion of solar rays through the earth. The change which has been wrought in Christ shall be wrought in His members also.

The changes
in our Lord's
Humanity,
subsequent to
His resurrec-
tion,

The change wrought in Christ on His resurrection-morning was but the first of a series of changes. During the forty days which He passed between His disciples on earth, and His work in Hades, the process of His glorification was going on. His ascension to Heaven only waited until Heaven and His Humanity were brought into perfect accord. The moment of complete assimilation, and the moment of ascension are the same. From that moment He was parted from His disciples by an immense distinction of nature. Nor must we suppose that the last change was wrought in Him at His ascension. There were yet sublimer and sublimer changes to be effected. For He had not only to enter Heaven, but to pass through all the Heavens, on His way to His Throne "over all." And as a series of transformations prepared His humanity to go up from Hades to Heaven; in like manner we must presume that other and higher transformations characterized His rise from Heaven to Heaven. His human nature would put on the glory of each successive Heaven. But in order to leave Heaven after Heaven behind Him, it would be necessary that His humanity should surpass the power, purity, and glory of each Heaven. We may be sure that there was nothing arbitrary in the movement of His Human Nature through the heavens. If He found not His permanent throne and

and His
ascension.

sphere of influence, until He was far above them all, it was for no other reason than that our nature in Him was being wrought up to a condition transcending any thing that had been known throughout the heavens. According to the testimony both of Paul and John, the fashion and glory of His appearance had undergone unspeakable changes after His last interview with His disciples on mount Olivet. There was nothing over-powering in His glory on Olivet, but some half century later, when John, being "in the Spirit," saw Him, the glory was more than he could endure. "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead."

Acts xxvi. 13-15.
Rev. i. 11-18.

That our nature should be set on a level with the original thrones and dominions of heaven, is perhaps more than we should look for; but Paul asserts that the transforming Power of God has raised it "*far above* all principality, and power, and might and dominion." He asks God to make known to us this fact by a spirit of revelation. Nothing short of the teaching of the Holy Spirit will ever open to us the true significance of the Incarnation. We should wrong both the wisdom and justice of God, were we to suppose that He has arbitrarily raised human nature to the highest throne and dominion. God raises nothing, and never will raise anything, above its own legitimate rank and character. Our Lord distinctly taught the two disciples who asked Him that they might be, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, in His kingdom, that there would be no favouritism in His kingdom. The Humanity of Jesus is raised to the Supreme Throne, because it has acquired the Highest Virtues and Powers. It is raised above all, because it *is* above all. It alone embodies and represents "all the fulness of the Godhead." Infinite Justice would not allow our nature, even in the Person of Jesus, to take a seat above all the thrones of heaven, until it possessed qualities that surpassed them. Before the Man, Christ, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," as "the Head of all Principality and Power," He had already "*obtained* a more excellent name than they." Our nature, which in Christ has vanquished and subdued every tempting

Nothing arbitrary in the elevation of Man.

Col. ii. 10.
Heb. i. 4

and adverse power, is the chief of all the ways of God, and the first work of the Divine Power. The highest things in heaven are under His feet. In other words, the lowest principles in the Human Nature of Christ, are made higher than the highest principles in angelic nature. "I overcame, and am set down with my Father in His Throne." "Being made so much better than the angels," all "angels, authorities and powers are made subject unto Him." Awful supremacy of Man! Not possible to be uttered! Yet Paul's motive in praying that we may understand this great wonder-work of God, is, that we may know what is "*the hope of our calling.*" For the same Power which wrought in Christ is now working in us, that we may be made partakers with Him. "Ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all Principality and Power." "Father, I will that they be with Me where I am."

Rev. iii. 21.
Heb. i. 4.
1 Peter iii. 22.
Col. ii. 10.
Jno. xvii. 24.

In our present state of darkness and humiliation, we can in no wise lift ourselves up to the height of our Divine calling in Christ Jesus. The power of contemplation is weak in us through the fall. But "we are married to Him, Who is raised from the dead." In His death we are dead, and in His life we are alive again for evermore. Our old nature holds us, but we are in a manner dead to it: our new nature in Christ is attracting us much more strongly than our fallen nature ever did: more strongly because more deeply, and with our whole approval. Between us and our reigning Head, there is a living, organic connection, a most real and most near relation.

1 Cor. vi. 17. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." "All the body by joints and bands" is "knit together" with the Head, "having nourishment ministered" from the Head, that all the members of the body may grow and increase "with the increase of God." The nourishment, which "the King of Glory" ministers unto our souls, is His glory. "The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them." If streams of life were not constantly descending from Christ to His members on the earth, how could they "grow up into Him in all things?" Our hope of being with Him in glory, and of being "like Him," is "sure and steadfast," inasmuch as His glory is now being

Rom. vii. 4.

Col. ii. 19.

Jno. xvii. 22.

“rooted, grounded, and built up in us.” The “nourishment ministered” by Him is “meat indeed,” and “drink indeed,” and is surely preparing us for transformation “into the same Image.”

And our Lord being “Head over all things to the Church, which is His body,” He is causing all things to work together for her perfecting. The heavenly hosts, knowingly, and the creatures and circumstances of time, unknowingly, are ministering to the special “kingdom of heaven,” which is now in formation. The whole creation is as one tree, for the growth and ripening of one fruit, namely, “The Body of Christ.”

“all things”
subject to
Christ, for
His body’s
sake.

The empire of redeemed men, since it is to be a manifestation of Christ’s fulness, must needs be of inconceivable magnitude, as well as a beauteous unity. As every organ and part of the body is necessary to every other organ and part, so are all the organs and parts to the Head. “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” The whole Church as one body, vastly and richly manifold, is filling, and to be filled with the “Fulness of the Godhead ;” for the “Fulness of the Godhead” is “the fulness of Christ.” It is the good pleasure of the Eternal Father that the kingdom of His Son should pre-eminently bring out to view, and mirror the most hidden depths of His nature.

1 Cor xii. 27.

The whole number and organization of redeemed men being complete, as one Divine Body and Kingdom, it will be ruled and swayed as one, by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, and through Him, by God the Father ; and thus be the central organ and the first servant of His Love to the universe. But the ultimate mission of the kingdom and forces of redeemed humanity, is not yet disclosed.

Compared with the one grand sorrow of not being a member of this Divine Human Kingdom, no calamity can ever be called great. However long the series, and painful the character, of our trials may be, we shall call them a light affliction, and but for a moment, if they open our way to our Eternal Home. But every other root of human life “shall be as rottenness,” save that of “Christ in us ;” and all

The great
calamity.

Isa. v. 24.

blossom except that of His Beauty upon us, “shall go up as dust.”

Alone before God ; and looking forward to your own Eternity, review the whole prayer, (17 to 23 v.) and muse there-upon, until you feel the insanity of allowing any thing in time, or mortal life, to becloud “the Hope” with which “the Father of Glory” is seeking to allure the children of men.

III.

THE STRIKING CONTRAST BETWEEN THE NATURAL CONDITION OF
MEN, AND THEIR NEW CONDITION IN CHRIST JESUS. CHAP. II.

CHAP. II. 1-3.—*And you who were dead in trespasses and sin ; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience : 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation, [the scope of our life,] in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

OUR exaltation in Christ is not self-exaltation. Having carried us so far beyond ourselves, lest any motion of spiritual pride should be stirred in us, our Apostle immediately sets before us what we are in ourselves. If, by being made the Body of Christ we are raised above angels, He shows good reason why we should be humbler and meeker than they. The kingdom of regenerate men, in virtue of its most intimate relation with the Son of God, is spoken of by the prophets, not simply as "The House of the Lord," but as being "*the mountain* of the House of the Lord." Nevertheless its members, though inheriting the loftiest powers, and occupying the central sphere of the Divine government, will neither oppress, nor grieve any order of Heavenly spirits. There will doubtless, to eternity, be a peculiarly attractive beauty in the humility of those who were once lost spirits, "dead in sin." And if they are as "the little child" among the hosts of Heaven, it will not gall the elder angels, that

The highest
are the hum-
blest
creatures.

they are the greatest, and that the hill of their inheritance is exalted above all the heavenly hills. It will rather be a pure satisfaction to them, that the most self-renouncing of all creatures should be vested with supreme power and glory.

Danger of
rejecting
Truth.

The words commencing this chapter declare truths so unpalatable, that they require, on the part of the expositor, the greater faithfulness, and both for himself and his readers, a spirit of prayer and meekness, lest we dissent from Truth, and abide by fallacies. In the present state of our nature, apparent truth, that is, fallacy, has a far greater hold upon us than Truth. Until the soul has made some considerable progress in regeneration, Divine Truth is in positive disfavour. Our own views of the present world and of our natural condition, do not greatly disturb our self-approbation ; but God's way of setting ourselves before ourselves is very humbling and disturbing. Men do not like to be told that human nature, as they inherit it, is a constituted enmity against the Truth of God. Against the Truth, and against the first estate of their own nature, are the same thing. For man's divergence from Truth is no greater than his divergence from the original condition of humanity, as being in the image of God. Indeed it is probably not so great, since in thought and desire he is often nearer to the kingdom of God, than is possible to be realized in the present spurious form of his being. "God inflicted no more penalty on Adam for his sin, than you would inflict upon your children, if they should blow out their own eyes by an act of disobedience, in the use of gunpowder." You would deeply feel for and pity them that they had cut themselves off from light all the days of their life. And it is certain that, "like as a father pitieth his children," God pitied Adam for that unhappy change which, under the action of his own choice, had been wrought in him. "God was grieved at His heart," and from that day to this has continued to pity the fallen race. The only thing which was crucified in Jesus, or which needed to be crucified, was that which Adam and his race had become through their fall. But the whole will and affections of men have consented to their nature as it is ; they

have adopted it, and cannot endure the thought that it is essentially at variance with God's idea and requirement. They cannot conceive that their natural life is just a mask drawn over their spiritual death. The apparent truth is, that man, "by nature," is very much alive; but the Truth is, that, "by nature," the real man is dead. Again, the apparent truth is, that "the course of this world," is according to God; but the Truth is, that it is according to a very different spirit, and not according to God. Judging from appearance, what evidence is there that a new-born babe is the fruit of wrath? And yet our nature, left to its own working, and coming to its own natural issue, corroborates the Bible testimony, that "by nature, we are all the children of wrath." Pleasing as the apparent truth may be, and displeasing as Truth may be, we had better take God's part, and stand on His side, although it be against ourselves, and against the whole world. In the end, we shall find that God's truth, instead of being against us, is the only voice that calls us back from our degradation, to the true and original dignity of our nature. Strange, that men should be averse to their own honour, and plead for their debasement. Strange, that they should trample their own crown under their feet, and abide by a form of nature, which renders the restoration of their crown an impossibility. The soul of man has fallen into a life which is a death unto God and heavenly things.

Our Lord does not say that He came to seek and to save that which was in danger of being lost, but "that which *was lost*." Nor does He say of the prodigal son, who represents every man's natural condition, that he would have died, and would have been lost, but that he "*was dead*," and "*was lost*." So the Apostle says in this place, you "*were dead*" in time past, when you walked according to the course of this world. Death, therefore, as Christ and inspired men speak of death, is precisely the same thing as all natural men call their life. And it is undeniable, that men have fallen into a life which is a death to God, and to the heavenly life. Enmity against God could not exist except in an intelligent life. And this

The natural
life of the soul
is its death.

opens up to us the secret of "*the power of death.*" Death would have no power to hold any human soul back from God, if that death were not a pleasure. The soul pleasing itself in the sensible objects of this world, and not pleasing itself in God, is its death. The opportunity of drinking the river of God's pleasures, is given to men, but they have no heart to it. What does this prove but that the present form and condition of human nature is a most real death? The death into which the angels fell has passed upon men. The difference being that the fallen angels have no earthly bodies, and are therefore incapable of enjoying the sensible pleasures of the world, except so far as they taste them through the souls of men. But there is no other separation between the fallen angels and unregenerate men, than their mortal bodies. If in the affections and strength of their own natural life, men resist the life which God offers to them in His Son, what clearer evidence could they have that "*the power of death*" has the mastery over them? "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life."

Jno. v. 40.

There is even a natural proof that human life in this world labours under the great "*power of death.*" Why should it be impossible for the men in heaven to die, and impossible for men on earth to continue in life? Our Lord speaking of those "*who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world,*" says, "*neither can they die any more, because they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God.*" But on earth men cannot live, because, having lost the Divine Life, they have fallen under the dominion of temporal nature, and they must share with the vegetable and animal world, in the general law of death. But if men were "*the children of God,*" according to their first make, they would have dominion over the conditions and laws of temporal nature. Creatures who are in harmony with the Nature of God cannot die; and creatures who fall out of harmony with God, and into harmony with physical nature, cannot have any thing but a vain life, subject to sorrow and death.

Lu. xx.
35, 36.

Though out of agreement with God, and no longer His

true children, seeing that they are in agreement with "the course of this world," until they are awakened by the Spirit of God, they do not painfully feel the vanity and humiliation of their condition. Indeed they find a satisfaction in their fall, and are unwilling to be redeemed. "I called, ye refused," "I would, but you would not," complains their Saviour. The world finds occupation and entertainment enough for their mortal nature, completely to hide from their view the death and misery of their immortal humanity.

Oh, most strange world! God is indeed in thee, and ceaselessly working for thy good; but He is in thee as One Whom thou knowest not. "There standeth One among you Whom ye know not." God loves thee, thou strange world; but thou art a very real Cross to Him. He asks thee for grapes; thou givest to Him a wild growth, but not grapes. He asks thee for drink; thou givest to Him vinegar mingled with gall. He asks thee for "thy heart;" thou givest to Him solemnities, and reservest thy love for thine own pleasures. Strange world! He is thy life; and yet thou art dead to Him. To be dead to Him is quite natural to thee; but how unnatural is thy natural! To begin to live to Him, is to begin to die to thyself. And wholly to die out of thyself, is to enter into life. To die, as thou callest dying, is to live indeed; and to live, as thou callest living, is to be dead indeed. Most strange world! Thou art "the tree of the knowledge of *good and evil*," of which we were so earnestly warned in the beginning. There is so much in thee that is beautiful and good; thou easily persuadest unwary souls, that to live according to thee, cannot be displeasing to God.

Men may spare themselves much conflict and difficulty, by living "according to the course of this world." They will escape the Divine Cross; but they will also renounce the Divine Life. To live "according to this world" is said to be "according to the prince of the power of the air." With a subtle, mighty force, the spirit of the world makes itself one with the spirit of our blood, and gladly we yield submission to the warm gulf-stream; but the Spirit of God cries, 'children,

"This world."

John i. 26.

How the
Cross may be
escaped.

swim not with, but against the stream.' The methods and arts are innumerable by which the spirit of the world seeks to bury in oblivion every thought of our eternal interests. So strongly are we inclined, "by nature," to the course of this world, that we shrink back from Christ as though His life would be our death.

On the ground of there being a great and powerful order of spirits, who are bitterly and determinedly opposed to the life of God in man, "the course of this world" is perfectly intelligible. Otherwise, indeed, the disaffection of the fleshly soul towards God, as a condition that is natural to us, would be wholly inexplicable.

Apology
for man.

Willingly, therefore, we make this apology for men. If the prevailing spirit and current of the present world, be "according to the Prince of the power of the air," then the chief blame of man's spiritual death remains with that great adversary, whose name comprehends not legion, but legions of legions. God blames man, that he stubbornly prefers the smooth gulf-stream of flesh and blood, after He has called him to another course; but at the same time, yearns over him with fatherly pity, knowing that the force which carries him along, is not simply in the world without him, but in the life within him. The enemy has not sown into man a propensity to evil; there is also a "power of the air" which is adverse to the Divine Life. It is therefore strictly according to His loving Justice, that the Father of men holds "the Prince of this world" to be mainly accountable for "the power of death," which reigns in their souls.

"The prince
of the power
of the air."

Without any perceptible noise or effort, you breathe the air and live thereby; but more noiselessly, and without awaking the slightest suspicion of their presence, designing spirits enter your souls, kindle desire, and lead forth thought, "according to their will." The secret evil which is done by them every day is beyond all power of calculation. Our Lord declares that much of the divine seed which He sows into human souls is devoured by these spirits. When beasts and birds of prey tear and devour the lamb, they are not turned to lambs, but

they subject the lamb to build up and strengthen their own nature. Even so, evil spirits appropriating Christ's seed turn it to their own evil. The good which they take from man is only one-half of the mischief which they do him. They rob him, and sow in him their own seed of thought and will. Their types may be found in those insects and reptiles, which, while in the act of taking the blood of their prey, inject into them their own poison.

“The spider puts forth from herself a gossamer thread, which floats in the air and catches hold of something where she is not ; but no sooner does she find the farther end of her thread fastened, than she goes forth upon it, strengthening it and making it her highway. She thus opens and establishes communication over a gulf, which, but for her airy bridge she could not cross. Having suspended her bridge, she lets down pendants, and weaves between them an all but invisible gauze, in which her prey are to be taken before they suspect their danger.” The crafty spider would be still more Satan-like, if she could prevail upon the flies to weave the web, in which she meant to take them. “The Prince of the power of the air” is master enough of his art to do this. He persuades the souls of men, by a projection of their thoughts and desires, to weave themselves into connection with himself. And the more logical and conclusive their thought-system can be made to appear, so much the stronger is the connecting web between them and his kingdom. By this web he holds them, and over it he travels to poison and destroy them. It would be beyond his power to hold, or to poison any single soul, unless he first obtained the co-operation of that soul. He is, therefore, unsparing in the use of flattery. He compliments the human intellect on its system of thought. He persuades strong-minded men that the Christian faith is a weakness, but that their scientific method, being based on actual facts, is unanswerable. Honied poison. “The depth of Satan.” He leads men to make a joke of his very existence, and at the same time, gives direction to their thoughts and imaginations, that they may weave themselves into his power. Thought

Parable.

2 Cor. 5.

and desire are a soul-web floating in that subtle region of which Satan is the Prince and Power. The invisible works which connect souls with the apostate soul-world are carried on without intermission night and day. And these secret thought-operations and imaginations of the soul are as real as the soul herself. Satan's "strongholds" are expressly said to be reasonings ("λογισμοὺς,") and every high thing (πάν ὑψώματα), every lofty fortress built up by the enemy in man's heart and intellect, "that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." Every man on the earth is secretly forming his own relation, either with the kingdom of Heaven, or with the great fallen spirit-world.

If the case be so with the invisible shafts of our thoughts, imaginations, and desires, which are momentarily going forth from our souls, it is of greater importance than any of us can at present estimate, that these hidden motions and workings should be under Divine control and guidance. If our souls are under the Son of God, He will not only lead out the hosts of our thoughts and affections in the right eternal direction, but will form thereof a ladder of ascent and descent for the ministry of angels, between Himself and us.

Union with
Christ, our
only hope of
salvation.

Both by the living voice of His servants and the inward impulse of His Spirit, God is urging, beseeching men to enter into soul-union with His Son. Nothing less than this union can save them from falling a prey to the Fowler. If they reject the counsel of God, they are the children of disobedience, and abide in league with the great fallen spirit, "who has the power of death."

A law of death runs throughout all nature, and you are children of nature: therefore the law of death runs through you. Its stronghold is in your spirit. "Who shall deliver you?" You cannot deliver yourself. The Power is so much at one with the nature of your soul. Who shall separate between *you* and *it*, and deliver *you*? "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He will deliver you from your self-pleasing bosom subtlety, by His Divine subtlety. The action of His life is most secret and intense, "quick and powerful, and

sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit." The tenacity of your soulish life will hold and captivate your spirit-life for ever, if His life do not penetrate between them, and deliver you.

In times past, when we were merely the children of nature, we were all sold under this power. Until we gave our consent to the inward rule and dominion of Jesus, we were under "the Prince of the Power of the air." Even now the subtle element of his power wraps us about so closely, that we are constantly inbreathing it, and kindling into activity the fallen nature of our souls. If we are in earnest to be renewed and saved, it is important that we should cultivate an habitual yearning of desire after inward purity. If we inbreathe the Divine element of which Jesus is the Prince and the Power, we shall overcome at once the base element of our souls, "the course of this world," and Satan. "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Cor. xv. 57.

CHAP. II. 4-7.—*But God, Who is rich in mercy, for His great Love wherewith He loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by Grace ye are saved, see verse 8); 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.*

Behold another picture of human nature. The former is very dark, it is revolting. This is too bright, we are confounded by the glory. According to the former view of man, he is the prey and sport of Satan; according to this view, God loves him, and is wholly on his side. The first represents him as being clothed upon with a false life, and within that as being dead: in this he is declared to be inseparably one, in life and glory, with the Son of God. How strange that both these should be conditions of the same creature! In the valley of

A contrast.

this world, we behold him walking "in a vain shew," "without hope;" we lift our eyes, and lo, he is walking in freedom, as a son, restored to the eternal ages of his Father's right hand. The one is but the dark back-ground of the other. Man is the chaos and darkness upon which God makes His Love to arise and shine; and evolves out of the dark ground, a new nature of incorruptible substance and purest beauty.

The greatness
of love.

"God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." The greatness of this love is the greatness of God. The Love of God, is the God of Love. Who can speak of the riches of mercy which are the hidden depths of His Love? The whole amount of love in this one fallen world is unimaginable. How much less can we conceive the love which is diffused through the universe. Before the love of the Infinite Father, therefore, we are struck dumb. Yet we cannot be silent. Love compels utterance. Because Love is, and above all, because "God is Love," there must be speech. God can never utter His Love, but for that very reason, He will be always uttering it. He is Love-constrained. Angels and men are love-constrained. They are always and always embodying in speech and song what can never be fully spoken or sung.

The work of
Love.

God's highest work, His eternally accepted work, is to conquer by His love all the difficulties and evils consequent on creaturely wills. Rebellion against Himself is permitted on an immense scale, as an evidence that His intelligent creatures have a personal freedom of choice and action; and that He may show that the resources of His Love are adequate to every possible form and mystery of evil. Great is the mystery of sin, its subtlety, its depth, its power, its marvellous diffusion, its action upon the universe, its fair appearances, its pleasures, its manifold intellectual plausibleness; but God takes up the whole mystery of sin, and in bearing it, and dealing with it, brings into manifestation both the riches of His Love, and the depths of His Wisdom. Moreover, all God's obedient creatures are becoming stronger, through the opposition of the

enemy. Their unity likewise is becoming closer and richer, through their combined resistance of the wide-spread evil. Had sin not been permitted, we should never have known the fearful possibilities of the sublimest function of creaturehood; nor should we ever have known what was in God. In permitting disaffection towards Himself to spread as far as it can spread, and opposition against Himself to do the very utmost that it can do, and to continue as long as it can, God has shown, how complete His rest is, in the eternal Righteousness and Strength of His Fatherly government. His plan with determined evil is to allow it to display all its skill and power, and by its own measures to work out its own defeat. Hell and all rebellious spirits will see in the end, that self-defeat was the inevitable issue of every scheme of opposition which they ever conceived against the rule of God. With penitent spirits God has another plan, namely by His gentleness to lead them to self-conquest; and to fill and clothe them with the might and perfectness of His Son. After which they become great Powers. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power." "You shall receive power."

That God should either lower His own character, or abate an iota of His claim, is clearly an impossibility. "I change not." If man be saved, he must be wholly won from every thing in himself which is the fruit of the fall. He must be brought out of his own will; he must resign himself utterly to the unchanged and unchangeable will of God.

Very marvellous is the method of God's Love, by which He is breaking the power of evil and alluring the heart of man to Himself. That His Son might become the centre of rebellion, and have direct relations with all the powers of evil, He was clothed upon with our flesh, and sent into the world. The extremes of the universe were thus brought together in Him. His coming in the flesh is called the day of grace and vengeance; to penitent man, grace; to stubborn evil, vengeance. "The day of vengeance is in thy heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." "The Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the

The method of Love.

Isa. lxiii. 4.

Isa. lxi. 1, 2.

broken-hearted, &c., &c., to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." In our flesh, at length, Satan found a bulwark of righteousness against which, by all his craft and all his power, he could in no wise prevail. By His obedience unto death, Christ bruised the head of all evil, and rising again, He became our Lifegiver for evermore. When the sinless One died for sin, it was sin that died : when He rose, it was His sinlessness that rose, in our nature. As many as receive Him, receive His death for the death of their sin, and His sinlessness for their new life. In the daily tears of penitence, and by the incense of thanksgiving from myriads of human hearts, sin confesses itself to be wholly conquered by "the exceeding riches of God's grace, in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." Day by day, the power of Satan, in the souls of men, is broken, and the Love of God enthroned. Not only Love, but the Purity of God, is becoming a deep-rooted passion in the breasts of sinful men. Calvary is a divine success. "Thine, O Lord, is the Victory." "The foolishness of God is wiser than men ; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Jesus is God's short but perfect method of reaching the highest possible end, namely the conquest of sin and the perfection of man.

1 Cor. i. 25.

The eternal Father pouring His Heart upon us through such a channel, loves us into life again. We are one life with Christ. Had not God given His Son to be one with us in our humiliation and death, we could never have recovered our lost life. He sowed Himself into our death, to recover us from death. The glory-life of Heaven and Eternity, is given to the man Christ Jesus, without measure, for the whole race. The Love of God (made shrill by His sorrows and death), penetrates the eternal ground in us, and kindles therein the extinguished life. Being interiorly dead, the natural man has no conception of the possibilities of his nature. He cannot imagine that a world of new sensibilities could be opened in his soul, which in fact would make him an essentially new man, and relate him to the kingdom of heaven.

The trial of
the new life.

But the first kindling of the Divine life, in a fallen soul,

cannot be an unmixed experience! If you kindle a fire in green wood, along with the fire you will have clouds of smoke and vapour. Under the new and searching element there will also be much noise, from the fretting and steaming of the green wood. But in due time the fire will make a free passage for itself, and rising from the centre straightway towards heaven, the noise and vapour of smoke will subside, and there will be a clear glowing heat. "So is the kingdom of God." Let not newly quickened souls therefore be surprised, or confounded, by the internal conflict which the new life awakens in them. It must needs be so, while the carnal element is dominant in the soul. But there is great distinction in persons. Some are so meek by nature, and so sweetly and promptly respond to the Love of God in Christ, that they know little of conflict. "Consider the lilies, how they grow, they toil not," &c. ; yet are they beauteously arrayed. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." But where the fleshly element of the soul is strong and crafty, God hides Himself, for He finds nothing congenial. In many an earthly soul the Divine Life has but a trying, bitter experience. It is as the life of Jesus in Judea over again. His own receive Him not. He hath not where to lay His head. In moments of recollection, the life of God in the soul sighs, as though it were well nigh suffocated, groans under heavy bondage, and hangs in doubt as to the issue. The process will be humbling, and it may be very painful, but the most earthly and sensual spirits can be delivered and purified. Let such souls loathe their own serpentine cunning and impurity, and turn themselves wholly to the Lamb of God. One spring suffices to call forth lilies from their roots; but the cedars of Lebanon must undergo a great fight of affliction, and attain their maturity by very slow processes.

In our "last Adam" the whole work is done, death is dead, and all wrath is passed away. Perfect human nature is our portion in Him. "God who is rich in mercy," has done the best for us which could be done. Infinite Love

"It is
finished"
in Christ.

could not desire, nor infinite Wisdom devise for us, greater distinction, nor greater joy, than that we should be made one nature and one inheritance with the Lord Christ. The twain which God has joined together, and which no power to eternity can put asunder, are His only begotten Son and His human race. The Alpha embraces the Omega of lapsed being, and the Omega is taken up into the original unity of the Eternal life. This marriage, which He has made for His Son, constitutes the chief Corner-Stone of His whole House. It is the Rock-Kingdom against which no power shall ever be able to prevail. Less truly and less deeply has the life of our parents, or the spirit of nature, entered into us, than the spirit of life from the Son of God. Only secondarily is Adam our head. Our relation to him is comparatively recent and shallow. First and last and unchangeably, the Lord from Heaven is our Head. Adam and his fall can be, and shall be supplanted in us; but Jesus shall reign in us for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. With what inward exultation Paul must have written this sentence: *God has raised us up together, and enthroned us together in the Heavens in Christ Jesus.* In spite of his chain, he knew that a life was raised up in his spirit, which was at one with his Lord in Heaven. We also, in spite of our bonds and infirmities, have the like blessed consciousness of unity with Him. He is with us, we are with Him. If we are where our bodily presence is, surely where the deepest life of our spirit is, we are much more.

Matt. xvi.
15, 18.
Rom. viii.
38, 39.

Our human
joy.

Our human hope is sure and steadfast, our joy is beyond all bounds; God hath quickened us together with Christ. Because He lives we shall live also. Between us and that heavenly region, where Christ has His throne, the way is open to us. He has removed every bar. Having gone up from death, in the Eternal youth of His, and our, new humanity, it is impossible that our expectations should be too great. If the Son of God has joined His nature to ours, and ours to His, we must come to something higher and more wonderful, than we have at present the power to conceive. "Father, I

will that they be with Me where I am." This is surely enough to feed our expectation with wonder, at what we shall be. His Spirit is even now in our spirit, the work of our transformation is going on, and in The Great Father's decreed plan, we are sitting in our own places in Christ Jesus. According to an order which was in Him before the world was, is the order which we shall occupy before God in our home-kingdom for ever. He has brought the race for whom He died into closest fellowship with the infinite and endless resources of His Father. Thus has He filled to the full our immortal joy. And this was His object in making Himself one with us. "These things have I spoken unto you that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full." The beloved disciple testifies from his own experience, John xv. 11. that this fulness of human joy is to be found in "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." If we are brought into strict and intimate relationship with the source of all life and glory in the Father, our prospects for eternity are not only grand, beyond thought, but no limits can be assigned to the development of our powers, nor to the field of our service. I Jon. 1. 3. Had we the love of all creatures, unless the Love of God were the secret spring and life thereof, it would be but a passing vanity. Unless it be rooted in God, love is but as a flower divided from its roots. But if we are in Christ and Christ in us, we shall live in the midst of loving ones for ever. And such is the magnitude of the universe, and the multitude of the heavenly mansions, that in all probability we shall be finding and making new friends throughout all ages. This will be one of the most exhilarating joys of our eternity. For as our own powers unfold, and our wisdom and love become richer and more manifold, we shall find access to the higher worlds, and orders, of the Great Father's household. We are exhorted even now to ascend in thought and imagination to the land of promise, and walk about our Mount Zion which rises in the very midst, towering above all the heavenly hills. It is the hill of God's special desire. "The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation. This is My rest

Our mountain city, central to all the heavenly mansions.

for ever: Here will I dwell." (Psa. cxxxii. 13, 14.) "Go round about her," saith the Spirit, "count her towers," if you are able, "mark well her bulwarks." All her environs are defended by the fire of God's glory which breaketh out from her. "Out of Zion, the perfection of Beauty," God shines gloriously. None can come near unto her, who are not like her, "partakers of Christ," and at one with the strong powers of God. The powers of His purity which dwell in all the inhabitants of Mount Zion, are awful powers to impure souls. Adverse powers are said to assemble, to look, to marvel, and then to be troubled, dismayed, and haste away. "God is known in her palaces for a refuge," "Consider her palaces," and talk to your own heart of the myriads who are waiting to welcome you; and return from your excursion of faith, to hold more vividly in your thoughts, and more deeply in your love, your beautiful, your eternal home. Muse on your awaking, and rejoice in expectation of the love which will be poured around you from innumerable hearts. Doubt, anxiety, fear, will be impossible. To die impossible. Words expressive of the experience of every child of God in Heaven are already given to us; "Thou hast made me most blessed for ever;" "Thou hast made me exceeding glad with thy countenance!" The atmosphere of our home will be bliss. And our home on all sides will lie open to the countless home-kingdoms of our angel-friends.

Angels and
men, their
mutual affec-
tions.

Knowing that we were once "children of wrath," and dead in sins, it is natural to suppose that all the holy angels will regard us with a very tender interest.

And, remembering the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged, our love to God, and to His holy ones, who never at any time transgressed His commandment, will be the humblest and most pathetic thing in Heaven. The passion of our Saviour's Love will vibrate through us, and marvellously affect the ancient and unfallen powers of Eternity. Our sins and our sorrows, our darkness and our fears, and, in all, and through all, the love of God, are awakening, and creating sensibilities in us, which will give to

our sphere, our aspect, and the tone of our songs, a charm which the angels will recognise as the fruit of the great soul-travail of Jesus.

Our holy dead are sitting in the heavenlies, in the precise condition and circumstances that they wish to be. By faith and love we are sitting together with them. Though absent in the flesh, our home should be present to our spirit. What dearer subject can we muse upon, than our own entrance into our Father's house, the home of our forefathers, and our unknown kindred? To die, is to break our way through unto them, and thus to realise the dear unity which we have with them in the heavenly life. There are very tender reasons why our stay on earth should be brief. Not only are the limits and conditions of mortal life an unceasingly painful cross to the renewed soul; but a reunion with our friends, in their heavenly home, is the fulfilment of their hope and ours. To awake and find ourselves among them, will be the first of the new series of appeasements, which our Heavenly Father holds in store for us. To perfect the home-life of His children, is essential to the satisfaction of His own Fatherly Love. The disciples sitting round about Jesus, on the grassy slope of the mountain, walking side by side with Him on the sea-shore, or through the corn-fields, resting with Him at the evening meal in Bethany-contentment, while He stored their minds with His wisdom, and pacified their hearts with His love; these are humble foreshadowings of our eternal home-life in Christ Jesus. The Great Father has quickened us together, and made us one family-kingdom with His Son. "The Great Love wherewith He loved us" could do no less, and it could do no more.

We and our
holy dead are
one commun-
ion in Christ.

When sitting together with our friends and kindred in Christ, let us use the privilege of our faith, and picture them to ourselves, not as earthy and corruptible, but as they will shortly be, fair immortals, made like unto the Son of God. With such a family-hope, partings and bereavements are bearable. Earth could not satisfy our hearts, but our Father, and our Father's House will. In the end also the earth will be renewed, and made to correspond with the purity and glory of

our new nature in Christ. Heaven and earth are our hope, not as twain, but as one perfect, harmonious inheritance. The heavenly human home that has grown about Christ, will, in God's own time, descend, and take the whole earth within the sphere of her Divine Light; and Jesus and the saints shall possess the world. Short of this, there can be no resting place for the ever deepening sympathy and growing unity of the two homes. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Our King is gone "to receive for Himself a kingdom and *to return.*" The new song sung in Heaven, by "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," concludes thus: "*and we shall reign on the Earth.*"

Lu. xix. 12.

Matt. v. 5.

The study for
the ages to
come.

Eph. i. 10

Col. ii. 20.

In His work of redemption, which is to be the reconciliation of all things in heaven and all things on earth, God is preparing a spectacle, and a study, for the ages to come. "He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in the Heavenlies, in Christ Jesus, *that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.*" No angel in heaven foresees, or can foresee, what this spectacle will be. The Father has in Himself hidden reserves of power and glory, which will not be manifested until all the nations and generations of the saved come before Him in their unity. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." The kingdom of the Incarnation being the purpose, which He purposed in Himself, as the end and perfection of His creation, we may safely conclude, that there is more in store for the ages to come than heaven or earth is able to comprehend. God's plan must be wrought out to be known. It is greater, richer, and more blessed, than thought or imagination will ever conjecture.

Acts i. 7.

Eph. iii. 20.

CHAP. ii. 8-10.—*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them.*

The first two brothers, as we read, were far enough from being true brothers. They came of the same parents, but in spirit, taste, and the plan of their life, they were not kindred. Interiorly, there was not only no relation between them, there was strong antipathy. They were deeply divided in the spirit and character of their religious life; and from that day to this, two keenly antipathetic religious tendencies have continued side by side in the world. There is a religion of the earth, earthly, which strongly commends itself to man's fleshly reason; and there is a heavenly religion, which the earthly religion always resists, scorns, and crucifies. The one is a direct *gift* and *work* of God; the other is wholly a birth of the natural mind and will of man. They may both go by the name of Christianity; but in the one, you will find this world's spirit, this world's maxims, and this world's desires; in the other you will find supernatural principles, hopes and affections. The centre of the one is the wisdom of this world, the centre of the other is Jesus Christ. The spurious thing puts on airs and stands up for itself; the other knows its birth-right too well, and has too much heart-rest, to be mindful how it is esteemed in the world. The spurious thing, corresponding as it does, with man's natural mind and taste, never lacks advocates. Our Lord does not say, that the children of this world are wiser than the children of light; but He does say, that "the children of this world *in their generation* are wiser than the children of light." For the children of this world, are in their own sphere; but the children of light are in a foreign and inharmonious sphere. The worldly form of Christianity is

Division from
the beginning.

at home here. The Divine form of Christianity is the kingdom of Heaven, and is far from its native country here. Christianity which is not of this world, but of God and heaven, is unpalatable to the heart, and a positive offence to the reason of the natural man. Worldly or natural religion commends itself to men as they are ; but Divine religion, or true Christianity, requires men to be new creatures, and can only be commended of her own Heaven-born children.

The floods of
Matt. vii. 27.

We cannot be sorry for the rude floods that are coming, and the winds that are blowing, and beating against the house of our Christianity. What the winds and floods carry away will be no real loss to Christianity, or to any true disciple. Vital Christianity has been benefitted by every test which she has undergone, and is incapable of loss. The winds winnow her, and take nothing away but chaff. The floods settle her on her own immoveable foundations.

Christendom may be comprehended under four heads :

1. *The ritualism of the senses.* Rome and her Anglican daughter are here. We must go forth from this imposing camp, bearing our reproach. They have embalmed Christianity, and given to her the solemnity of a mummy. She lives no more, grows no more. They have clothed her with a gorgeous robe, and bow to their idol.

2. *The ritualism of the understanding.* Multitudes of Protestants rank under this head. They abhor the popery of vestments, lights, and incense, but they idolize words and doctrinal formulas. The ritualism of the brain is as distinct from Vital Christianity, as the ritualism of the senses.

3. Then there is the multitudinous Antichrist, with a bold and confident tread, whose scriptures are physical nature and her laws, whose god is force, and whose light is their own nature-illuminated intellect.

4. Very distinct from all these are a fourth class, who maintain that nothing avails but the new nature. "Christ in them," expresses their faith, their life, and their hope. Christ in man, being Divine Life in the soul, admits of new growth, new wisdom, new beauty, and new conquests for evermore.

If we drew out, in order, the teaching of these verses, it would perhaps fall into something like the following statements.

That an affection in the Divine Nature is the primary cause of human salvation : "*By Grace ye are saved.*"

This affection of God is apprehended by the creature's faith. "*By grace ye are saved through faith.*"

Though the creature's faith is His own, by the free consent and voluntary exercise of his own heart and mind, nevertheless, in its principle and operation, it is the work of God : "not of yourselves ; it is *the gift of God.*"

Man's salvation, instead of consisting in a single act of God, is His most patient work : "*For we are His workmanship.*"

With respect to our new nature, which is the work of God, Jesus Christ is our father Adam : "We are His workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus.*"

This new nature gives evidence of itself by a corresponding excellence of character : "We are created in Christ Jesus *unto good works.*"

These good works are adequately provided for by a pre-arranged plan of God, and by the nourishment of our new nature in His Son ; "*Created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before prepared that we should walk in them.*"

We must consent to it with our whole heart, that our salvation from first to last, is of God and by God. Drawn by Him, we must yield, and come, as of our own accord, into a consenting, loving relationship with Him in Christ ; that by the working of God's self-prompted grace, through our co-operating faith, we may be saved. The meekness of faith is our response to the gentle motion of the Divine Spirit in our will. In no single God-ward or heaven-ward step is man self-moved, but in consenting to be drawn, it is as truly and properly his own act, as any act of sin ever was. It is indeed much more truly his act ; for no act of sin ever obtains the like depth and fulness of human consent, which faith in Christ does. There is a very miracle of gentleness and sweetness in

Salvation, of
God, through
faith.

the unity of God and the creature, in the work of salvation. As from their dark bed and root, without will, flowers are drawn forth to behold their sun, even so, with his consenting will, man's nobler spirit is drawn to his sun. Sunbeams are a gift to the dark root; germination is its own motion; so the principle of "faith is the gift of God," while the act of faith is the co-operation of man.

The deep foundation of human freedom.

How meek and lowly at heart is our God, and what a precious joy it is, that God with man, and man with God, are thus joined and at one, in the act and work of faith! And how deeply founded and joyous is the freedom of the redeemed, since the whole work of their regeneration is wrought by the Spirit, in unity with their own desire. The will of God in them, becomes the perfect law of their own liberty. The consenting activity of their own will in harmony with God's purpose, gives them at once a deep, fearless play of their own powers, and complete rest in God. When the kingly nature of Christ is formed in us, with what self-possessed dignity all our works will be done!

Observe, that the same passage of Scripture which teaches us that salvation is "not of works," declares that it is "unto good works." God puts no trust either in our conscience or affections; He *creates us unto good works*. The seed principles and adequate causes of all the "good works" of God's children, were provided for in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world. In His Only-begotten Son, the scheme of creation was always before God, as one perfect and orderly whole. If, therefore, fallen creatures are ever to regain their completeness, it is clear that they can only be "complete in Him." The last developments will be but the fulfilment of first causes. The "good works" which men shall bring forth to eternity, were prepared for, before man or angel fell. In "the True Vine," all the branches and their fruit were secured, and from Him, they will appear in their season. "From Me is thy fruit found." The fruit-bearing seasons of His children are hid in the Father's power.

The fruit of the new nature.

Hos. xiv. 8.

It should never be lost sight of, that our salvation is a new

creation. We shall ultimately have a nature, to obey the impulses of which will be to obey God. At present, in order to please Christ, we have often to walk contrary to the motions and leadings of our own nature. Herein is our most serious cross, that our chief difficulty, our easily besetting sin, is a nature and a life in our own souls. God is delivering us, and will deliver us, from this sore cross. Our whole nature will be perfectly congenial, both with itself and with God. Before we leave the world, we shall discover that God has already made a closer, stronger relation between us and His Son, than ever was made between us and our mortal bodies. The union between the Son of God and the inner man is so congenial, so precious, that all believers, at length, prefer to leave the outer man, that they may go to Christ. Hope deserts the union between man and his mortal body; while the hope, springing from the union between man and Christ, becomes more and more ardent. One of the blessed rewards of union with Christ is that it deprives death of its gloom, makes it positively desirable. "We groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house (our new nature) which is from heaven." "We are willing rather to be absent from the body, (the body of this death,) and to be present with the Lord." "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "To depart, and to be with Christ is far better."

2 Cor. v. 1-8.

Phil. i. 21, 23.

2 Cor. v. 5.

Re-made by
God in Christ
Jesus.

"Now He that hath wrought us (made and prepared us) for the selfsame thing is God." He has created us anew in Him, by Whom He created all things at the very first. In the beginning, before the world was, and before Satan departed from the truth, and therefore before disorder began, all things stood in His Son. He being "the image of the Invisible God," was necessarily "the First-born of every creature," and the only Medium of the Creative Power.

To help your appreciation of what it is to be "*created in Christ Jesus*," consider deeply the following orderly series, as set down by this apostle:

"He is the Image of the Invisible God."

"The First-born of every creature."

"In Him (*ἐν αὐτῷ*) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth," &c., &c.

"All things were created (*ὅτι αὐτοῦ*) *by Him*, and (*εἰς αὐτόν*) *for Him.*"

"He is before all things."

"By Him all things stood together."

"And He" (Who was the Proto-type and Maker of all things) "is the Head of the Body, the Church :"

Who is the beginning, "the Firstborn from the dead :"

"That," as, "in all things" created, He had the pre-eminence, "He might," also "have the pre-eminence," in the redeemed creation.

"It pleased the Father that in Him all Fulness should dwell."

"In Him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Col. i. 15, 19.
ii. 9

To be "created in Christ Jesus," therefore, is to be created in tune with all things, both the things of the original and un-fallen, and of the fallen and redeemed creation. If thou art created in Christ Jesus, though a creature, and as it were, a very small seed, thou containest the wonders of God. Thou knowest, and wilt yet know more painfully, what it is to be created in fallen nature unto vanity, labour, sorrow, and death; but rejoice and be exceeding glad that thou also knowest, and wilt know more and more, what it is to be "created in Christ Jesus," unto Truth, and Beauty, Unsearchable Riches and Rest, Glory, and Endless Life.

In thy new creation how near and dear thou must be to the heart of God! Thou hast come into the nearness and dearness to the Father, of His Christ.

CHAP. II. 11-13.—*Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called (scornfully) Uncircumcision, by the (party) called Circumcision, —the hand performed Circumcision in the flesh. 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God (Atheists) in the world: 13 But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who once were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

This Apostle sets no value on the distinction between circumcision and uncircumcision. He says to the Jew: Your circumcision is only a hand-wrought, external performance. It is simply "in the flesh." It involves no change in the spirit, or character, of the man. By the repetition of the word "called," Paul expresses his contempt for the distinction. He virtually says: The Jews are just as far from the knowledge of the true circumcision, as the Gentiles. "Circumcision is nothing, and Uncircumcision is nothing." He goes even farther: "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." Circumcision was therefore only a sign, looking forward to Christ, and regeneration through Him.—"In Whom ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ." Christ's New Humanity is the only circumcised Humanity before God.

Jew and Gentile are not essentially divided. They were one people, before they were divided. By little and little, the Gentiles lost even the form of sound words, and gave themselves up to a line of things utterly foreign to the mind and nature of God. "Living oracles" were confided to the Jews, and "shadows of good things to come"; while the Gentiles walked in the vanity of their own minds. Through the Jews, Christ came. "Salvation is of the Jews." We are hereby

Circumcision is nothing.

1 Cor. vii. 19.

Rom. ii. 28, 29.

Col. ii. 11.

The unity of men, older than their division.

solemnly warned, that a people may have "the covenants of promise," and themselves not enter into the promise; that salvation may go forth through them, and they not be saved.

The ceremonial nearness of the Jew to God, became a snare to him. It was rather a vain conceit, than an actual experience. It puffed him up, and did not make him Godlike. In the end, his affectation of nearness wrought a greater remoteness. When God manifested Himself in the person of Jesus, there were no people on the earth less able to recognise Him. "He came to His own, but His own received Him not." From that hour the Jew fell into the background, and the Gentiles came to the front. Their greater remoteness ended in greater nearness. That which is first often carries within it that which is last, and that which is last as often embodies that which is first. Therefore, let us judge nothing before the time. Jew and Gentile, for ages before their division, were one human nature, and they are destined to return again into unity, in Christ Jesus. "There is neither Jew, nor Greek, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Gal. iii. 28.

Christ and
Flesh, the
contrast.

Christ is our only Royal Blood. To be in Him is to be in the First and the Last, in the beginning and the end, of the whole purpose and creation of God. To be in the flesh is to be in what cannot hold together. The flesh and vanity make one; Christ and Hope make one. To be in the flesh, therefore, is to be "without hope;" but to be in Christ is to "abound in hope." To suppose that there can be hope for any creature without Him, is to be wholly ignorant of Him. No one has any true knowledge of the Son of God, who does not perceive Him to be the Hold-fast and Integrity, the Life and Light of every creature. "Without Me ye can do nothing." "Without Me," you are but "flesh," a mere failing, fading, impossible existence. The most striking and complete of all possible contrasts is that between man in the flesh, and man in Christ. Man in the flesh asserts himself, and does everything in his power to defend himself from breaking up, but he perishes in the attempt. Man in Christ, without effort, endures for ever. The glory of man in the flesh, is as the flower of the field.

Man, in the flesh, comes forth as if he had hope, but he swiftly glides past his noon, and the inevitable evening comes on, and with evening, decay. God permits the effort of the flesh to run on for ages, that its vanity and the futility of its working, may be more abundantly shown. Flesh is that which is, and yet is not. No one can be in the flesh who has not ceased to be homogeneous with God, and with all incorruptible creatures; and so long as he walks in it, he walks "in a vain show." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Every spirit, therefore, in the flesh, who lives "after the flesh shall die." Carnality of soul is death. Every spirit that hath Christ hath eternal life. Christ then is our word for True Substance; and Flesh is our word for vain, impracticable substance. Christ is wholeness, harmony, truth; Flesh is deficiency, discord, and illusion. The flesh has only to do with shadows. That awakened sensibility of the soul, called faith, which transcends all shadows, and comes face to face with reality, is utterly beyond the power of the flesh, and incomprehensible to the natural man. The Incarnation is God's method of making faith easy to man in the flesh. Rom. viii. 6.

Christ is God in His descent, making Himself one with us in our fall, in order to recover us from our fall. Christ is God coming near enough to us, and in a sufficiently palpable and apprehensible form, to allure us to seek after our exceeding great and eternal reward, in Himself. If Christ be the revelation of the Pure, Eternal Substance, He must be Man's Supreme Good. Enoch knew this secret. Abraham knew it. "I am thy exceeding great reward." Moses knew, the prophets knew, that God Himself is man's crown of glory.

To be "in the flesh," therefore, and not "in Christ," is literally to be destitute of all reality and hope. But the God of this world flatters men, and they like to be flattered, that they can be in God, and have hope, although they are not in Christ. But Paul's order will be found sooner or later to be inexorably sequential:

Without Christ.

Without Hope.

Without God.

Nature finds no way of escape for herself out of the vain life. How then should the nature-spirit put man into the way of life? Make the forces and laws of nature your god, as thousands do, and your days of sunshine are numbered. Your force-god will decompose you, and finding neither ground under you, nor light about you, Heaven's logic and Paul's will occur to you, "without Christ," "without Hope," "without God." It is a source of malicious joy to the god of this world, to see men who have neither the love nor the knowledge of God in them, never doubting their own faith in the Being of God. Satan's scope of action is the sphere of visible things; and men may be subtle and profound students of these things, and yet be utterly "without God in the world." They may walk in the enthusiasm of delusion and be "without hope." They may be held captive by the universe, and no thought, or affection, of their spirit, be ever projected into the sphere of God's being. Like silly insects which cannot believe that light is their snare and the gate of destruction, so do men glory in their course of death. Be instructed now, ye kings and master-spirits of the earth, for though you believe it not, the day will come that will compel you to recognise the fact, that every spirit of whom Christ is not the Life and the Light, is not only "without God," but in direct antagonism against Him.

"Made nigh"
in anew blood.

The one Gospel of God to the whole world, is that dark and distant spirits can not only be brought nigh, but "made nigh *in the blood of Christ*," as grafts are not simply brought nigh, but "made nigh" to the tree, from which they are to derive their life. The graft is "made nigh," taken up into unity with the tree, by the life-blood of the tree. Man is "made nigh," taken up into unity with God by receiving the life-blood of Jesus into his spirit. As the sun gives out of himself to the earth, and thus brings the earth into fellowship with himself, so Christ gives out of Himself to the human soul and makes man one with God. Though sitting in the border-lands of the outer darkness, though the shadow of the great death be already fallen upon you, the life of Christ will deliver you from

the vain life, and His truth, from the logic of the god of this world. Multitudes whose will and reason were held in the flattering meshes of the flesh-and-nature-spirit, have been delivered. There can be no greater work, or wonder, than the deliverance of souls from their own life. In their own blood, they were "far off" from God, and could not be brought nigh. They have therefore repudiated their own, in favour of Christ's blood. Their soul was flesh, ("carnal, sold under sin,") their glory was vanity, their hope was illusion, their whole world was a vanishing shadow, and they were tenaciously holding that which held them; but they have relinquished all, for a new life, a new hope, a new world, in Christ Jesus. By shedding His blood, Christ has taught us for ever, that in nature's blood there is no salvation. By shedding His blood, He opened the way of release; and by giving to us the blood of His New Humanity, He makes the loss of our life to be the way of life. "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." The way is mysterious. It is the salvation of one's life, by the loss of his life. The blood of Christ is clearly susceptible of two very distinct apprehensions, corresponding with the distinction between the humanity that lived and died on earth, and the Humanity which now lives in Heaven and can die no more. As the children were partakers of a strange blood, (a blood which most effectually cuts us off from the kingdom of True Life,) "He likewise took part of the same," that He might once for all, sacrifice it, and take the bar away. By His blood-shedding, the bar is for ever removed; and in virtue of His New Life, He is become the first fruits unto God of the new human race. In His Divine Blood He is "made nigh," and in no other can we be "made nigh."

Every blood makes its own nature. Paul prays that we may be made perfect, and well-pleasing in the sight of God, not in the blood which brought the great shepherd of the sheep under the curse, and into death; but "in the blood of the everlasting covenant," in which He was brought from the dead, into the Glory of the Father. And if we are ever to be pure, glorious,

Every blood
makes its own
nature.

76 *The Unity of All Things in the Blood of Christ.*

and immortal creatures, it can only be in the Life, or through the Blood, of the pure, glorious, and immortal Son of God. Our Lord therefore not only declared a deep truth, but revealed a precious law, when He taught that no man can be a member of His kingdom, or inherit eternal life, except by hating his own life, and deriving a new life from Him. When we understand this exchange, instead of regarding it as a gloomy truth, it will give us the purest joy. The necessity for exchanging our blood for His Blood, our spirit of life, for His Spirit of Life, is our most sacred privilege. What we call the Lord's Supper, is His monumental testimony for all time, that every one of His disciples must derive currents of life from His Divine Humanity, in order to the growth of the new nature. As in the blood of every creature, all the elements and powers of its life are present; in like manner, "the Blood of Christ" expresses in one word all the virtues and powers of His Divine and Human Nature. The blood which made, and is constantly reproducing this mortal body, is a fluid prepared from the whole of visible nature. But the Blood of Christ from which our new nature is derived, and by which it is fed, is the unity of all invisible and eternal powers. The blood of nature gives us a nature and standing in the world: the Blood of Christ gives us a nature and standing before God.

Consider well the two bloods, and receive instruction. How "far off" you are from God, in the spirit and blood of your own nature, you should learn from the horror and darkness of Christ, which He suffered by coming into your lot, and enduring your condition. On the other hand, in the perfect harmony between God and the New Humanity of Jesus glorified, learn how "nigh" you are made to God, by the Blood of Christ. In Him, our nature is one with God, and His blood makes us partakers of His oneness. Wherefore, "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the Atonement." Being born again of His Incorruptible Substance, as new-born babes, let us desire the sincere milk thereof, that we may grow thereby.

The unity of all
things in the
Blood of
Christ.

Rom. v. 4.
1 Peter i. 23.
1 Peter iii. 2.

CHAP. II. 14-18.—*For He is our Peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition; 15 Having abolished, in His flesh, the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances; (the law of ceremonial observances;) for to make in Himself of twain One New Man, so making Peace; 16 And that He might reconcile both unto God, in One Body, by the Cross, having slain the enmity in Himself ("in His flesh," see 15th ver.); 17 And came and preached Peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

It was something very great which was made by the blood-shedding of Jesus Christ; but something which is hard to be spoken, seeing that men are dull of hearing and slow of faith. Paul says, He has made Peace through the blood of His Cross, not a partial peace, but a peace which will grow and prevail until all things in earth, and all things in heaven are one kingdom of Peace. Col. i. 20. The central and efficient beginning of the great end, is made and established. It is a great power, and shall reign until the pœans of the last harmony shall resound from end to end of the universe. The humanity with which God could not be at one, is for ever put away in the death of Christ. Old humanity is gone. But the humanity which was slain on the Cross, was one flesh with the earth and the heavens as they now are. In the death of Christ, therefore, the present constitution of things has received notice of its great change, the final transmutation, for which it groans and waits. Further, in the death of Christ, the distinction between Jewish and Gentile flesh is slain. To say that Jews and Gentiles are made one, is the same as saying that all men are made one. Gentiles are all who are not Jews. If Jew and Gentile repudiate their own peculiar nature, in favour of New Human-Nature, in Christ, they immediately enter into everlasting relationship and peace with each other. The flesh

The great
Peace, and
how made.

which our Lord put to an open shame, nailing it to the Cross, was Jewish flesh, circumcised flesh : the enmity, therefore, arising from any distinction between flesh and flesh, is slain. The wall of partition between Jew and Gentile is wholly removed. Not a trace of this kind of flesh, or the other, remains in the One New Man. Jewish flesh and Gentile flesh stand on the same ground before God. Flesh has passed away. "If One died for all, then *all died*," 2 Cor. v. 14. Both Jew and Gentile must look upon Christ crucified, and see God's final rejection of their nature. Both of them must look upon Christ glorified, and see their acceptance with God, and their unity with each other. The Jew looking upon his flesh in Christ, as a thing "without the camp," disowned of God, mocked, whipped, and crucified, must resign every thought and feeling of the pre-eminence of his nature. And the Gentile, seeing the best flesh that ever lived, given over by God to every indignity, and to death in its most shameful form, must despair of the possibility of making his first nature acceptable to God. By the pre-determined counsel and plan of God, His Son came in the flesh, expressly that He might abase and destroy it. "They shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him." "Shall I say, Father, save Me from this hour?" "How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that *thus it must be*?" "But *for this cause came I unto this hour*." Before our nature can be restored to its true and eternal form, the rejected form thereof must be put to death ; and it must be put to death in a way which shall for ever teach how utterly it is rejected of God. "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it" (in its new form) "in three days." For the way into the Holiest could not be made manifest while as yet the first tabernacle of His body was standing. He put away the first by crucifixion, that He might raise up and establish the second. "By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once." Our first nature could not stand before God, it was therefore put away ; but our second nature, of which Jesus is the first fruits, has "entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence

Mark x. 34.

John xii. 27.

Matt. xxvi. 54.

Heb. x. 10.

of God for us." Our peace is made. Our cloudless, eternal, human good is an accomplished fact. "He is our peace." The whole unbroken life of God, the whole seven-fold harmony of the Divine Nature is in human nature. The reconciliation of all heights and depths is one Peace, in Christ. It is made in Him, that it may be made in men. John writes, "Peace be unto you from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come, and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, (the embodiment of all,) the Faithful Witness, the First Begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth," Rev. i. 4, 5. How it raises one's thoughts of the scope of God's purpose, in the Man Christ Jesus, and through Him, towards all men, to find that man's perfectness is so often directly referred to the Peace of God, as its Source and Cause. "The very *God of Peace* sanctify you wholly," &c., 1 Thes. v. 23. "The *peace of God* rule in your hearts," &c., Col. iii. 15. "*The God of Peace*" . . . "make you perfect," &c., Heb. xiii. 20, 21. The *peace of God*, in which all His powers and perfections constitute one play of Life, play through you, and play you into a like harmony of completeness, through Christ Jesus.

No nation can claim the New Humanity as peculiarly its own. It has no national distinction. It is New Man. It is the race deriving a new beginning from God. Christ has reconciled every distinction unto God, "in one body." By making "in Himself One New Man," He has founded the new order of things. The discrepancy, and all the enmity between God and man, and between man and man, and between the temporal and eternal form of the universe, are thus abolished. The unity of all things is come before God. And for that reason, and no other, the New Man is the reigning Power by Whom God is making all things new. When Jews and Gentiles, Asiatics and Europeans, rise superior to their own divided humanity, and put on the New Man, they are one blood, and one family, and members of the new creation. Universal Peace and Brotherhood are now a certainty. The storm has been long, but the great calm is coming. The

Not a new
nationality,
but New
Humanity.

80 *By His Spirit, Christ Preaches His Own Peace.*

Rev. xxi. 5,
xxii. 20.

By His Spirit,
Christ
preaches His
own Peace.

Atonement is perfect. Extremes are uniting. Heaven and earth are stretching forth their arms to each other. The day in which they will terminate their long estrangement, is nearing. "He that sat upon the throne, said, Behold I am making all things new. And He said to me, Write! for these words are true and faithful." "Even so, Come Lord Jesus."

Having abolished, by His death, all ground of variance between man and man, between heaven and earth, and between all things and God; and having presented to God the reconciliation of all things, in One Body, He came in the Power of His Spirit, and preached by His apostles, the deliverance of all nations from the limits and the tyranny of their own nationality. He is the Preacher of the Peace which He has made. The Peace of His New Humanity is mightier than all the gates of Hell. It goeth forth from Himself, a secret river of influence, a new Breath of Life, a Power and a Law, making all things new, and all things according to the unity made in Himself. He is the Awakener of the new man in men. Nature is strong, but Christ is stronger. "The weakness of God is stronger than men." For Christ endures the contradiction of men against Himself, that He may prevail more sweetly at the last. Christ crucified, and Christ risen again, are not only the Gospel, but are facts that are occurring through all time. For if Christ be beaten down under their feet, men grow weary of their success, until their own spirit sinks, and Christ rises in them, as a sigh, as a tender pain, as a meek root out of a dry ground, as a new branch from nature's decaying stock. Thus oftentimes does Christ hide Himself under defeat, that His power may secretly grow unto victory. "Thine, O Lord, is the victory." There will yet be wars and rumours of wars, bitter controversies, and the madness of unbelief, but through all, the Peace which Christ has made, will come, and come. The Right Man must reign, because He is the Right Man, and "the Only Potentate." Godhead and manhood being one in Him, His Peace is mighty through God, and no stronghold can hold out against His long-suffering and patience. "He shall not fail nor be dis-

couraged till He have set judgment in the earth." He knows Himself, and He knows men. He is sure that men will own Him at the last. He knows that the only Nature in which men will be able to rest, is the New Man which He has made in Himself. In the end, men will come to Him, as their only centre of repose.

Being brought into unity with the Son of God, we have direct "access unto the Father." Through Him, by one Spirit, all nations of men may come into communication with the deepest ground of God. The Spirit of sonship which Christ freely gives to all men, is their spirit of access. There is nothing in the Divine Nature, which, in Christ Jesus is not open to men. His Spirit in men, according to their ability, may search into all things, yea even the deep things of God. Jew and Gentile and men of every kindred and name, by One Spirit, draw their supplies of wisdom and love, purity and power, from the infinite fulness of God; and in the same Spirit have fellowship one with another.

Access to the Father.

CHAP. ii. 19-22.—*Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone; 21 In Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord: 22 In Whom ye also are builded together for (a spiritual habitation of God.) A habitation of God in Spirit.*

We must be purer and nobler than ourselves, and much wiser than nature can ever make us, before we shall have one worthy thought of the city of our God. It has been growing through all time. All true worth and glory are ever and ever going into it. It is the final treasure-house of whatsoever has become divinely good and perfect. Were there a way by which worldly men, as worldly men, could enter this Divine

The members
of Christ
greatly at
home in
heaven.

City, they would find themselves humiliatingly and wretchedly out of their element. Could any of us gain admission to it in our own nature and spirit, the loneliest sense of being strangers and foreigners would seize and oppress us. But if we are quickened together with Christ, and one nature and spirit with Him, we shall be perfectly at home with all its multitudes. The true children of God will be as much at rest in their Father's house, as though they had been born and brought up there. There will be innumerable diversities and distinctions of wisdom, ability, disposition, and taste, among them, yet all will be of one Heavenly nature. "As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there." Where all the arts had their origin, they will also find their home, and their freest scope of development. Redeemed men in heaven being the manifested fulness of the Son of Man, will be peculiarly honoured, by all orders of the heavenly world. They will be felt to be essential to the completeness of heaven. No one who thinks what Christ is to men, and what He has done to redeem them to Himself, can believe that He will ever allow anything throughout the endless future to separate them from Himself. He and they are more strictly, more closely, one life, than mother and child. It may be possible for a mother to forget her sucking child, but it is not possible for Him to forget the children for whom He has travailed in the sorrows of death.

Isa. xlix. 15.

Yet a little while, and only a little while, will the strange birth of nature cleave to us. Under the circumcising hand of death, it will drop away from the inner man, and we shall be with Christ. It will doubtless be many ages before we shall have a conception of the immensity of the heavenly household, and of the sources of our wealth and pleasure. The limits of the visible universe are unsearchable; how much more those of heaven! As there are constellations, and whole systems of constellations, in remote space, of which we literally know nothing, we may safely conclude that there are immense heavens, and heavens of heavens, which no one order of angels have ever seen. There will therefore remain for us,

always and always, knowledge in store, wonders in store, and new acquaintance to make. After long ages of growth, the apostle John, or some other beloved disciple, will be discoursing to us on the old words: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." Not only in God Himself, but in His works and in His children, we shall inherit His unsearchableness.

We are not angels, we are not even prophets, nor apostles, but we are one with them, in the city of God. Of the household, which is loving in God's love, and wise in God's wisdom, and strong in His strength, and blessed in His blessedness, and eternal in His Eternity, we are members. We make one fellowship in God with them all. One Corner-Stone holds us all together, and makes us one House. The Son of God is our foundation, or Central Life. Through His oneness with us, and our oneness with Him, His Divine Powers spring in us, and will for ever spring.

Had there been a complete correspondence between Christ and a physical foundation, Paul would have written on Whom, and not "in Whom." But the correspondence between things natural and spiritual is always limited and imperfect. Otherwise indeed, it would not be true, that the natural man cannot discern spiritual things. When natural things are used as parables of the kingdom of Heaven, approximative thoughts are suggested; but they are incapable of teaching strictly spiritual thoughts. They are shadows, but by no means "the very image of the things." Spiritual things, therefore, can only be accurately conceived by the spiritual mind.

Natural things
very partially
express
spiritual.

If the spirits of men are built into Christ, as into their Corner-Stone, the resemblance between this most vital unity and a stone structure must be very remote. The building up of all the organs of the body from the blood, and in the blood, is a more suggestive figure. The whole building, or body of regenerate men, is in Christ, as the body is in its blood, which is also its foundation; and He is the Life of redeemed humanity, as the blood is every where the life of the body.

A good
analogy.

84 *No Member of Christ can finally be out of his place.*

A better
analogy.

A yet stricter analogy is the relation between the soul and the body. "All the building" of the body is "fitly framed together" in one soul. One soul is in every part. The body owes its unity to the soul, which inhabits it. The soul is more than lord and master of the body; it is "all and in all." Without the soul, the body ceases to be a body: it rapidly returns to its dust. As is the soul to the body, so is Christ to men. "Without Me ye can do nothing." The whole building, or household of new mankind, is fitly framed together in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Spirit of His whole kingdom. It lives, and grows, from the seas of His out-flowing life. Not in men, but in Him, is the life of men. They live because He lives in them. As divine blood-relatives, apostles and prophets are exquisitely related, and we are no less closely and keenly related to both of them. The Spirit of "the Beloved" is in us all, and we are all in Him. The fittest, sweetest harmony of powers prevails in His Nature, and the like harmony springs up and re-appears in His seed. "He shall see His seed, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand." The whole believing human race is His seed. "We are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." The members of the body are innumerable, but they are a perfect unity, for One is their Life. Christ is indivisible.

Isa. liii. 10.

Gal. iii. 26.

No member
of Christ can
finally be out
of his place.

1 Cor. xii. 18.

In the kingdom of our new humanity, no member can be any more in a false position, or in a relation of unrest with any other member, than the ears of the human body can change places with the eyes, or the feet with the hands. The ruling order in the heavenly kingdom, will surely be greater and not less, than that which regulates the order of the different parts and organs of the body. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." As Hooker lay dying, he was observed to be held in an ecstasy of contemplation; and on being asked what might be the subject of his thoughts, he replied, that he was admiring the wondrous order which prevails throughout all the distinctions and multitudes of the heavenly world. "Without which order," he added,

"Peace could not be in Heaven." If on earth, which is "without the gate," we find so much regularity and order, what may we imagine to be the order and fitness of all things in the house of our Father's Glory? The endless manifoldness and the perfect order of His final heaven, God always saw in His Son. Therefore He is strictly the Beginning and the End of the Creation of God. He is the Eternal Mount, in Whom, unchangeably, the pattern of all things abides. His indwelling Life makes and moulds every member of His house, draws him to his right community, holds and preserves him in perfect relationship to every other community and member, and thus secures the unity of the whole body.

The growth of the body, on Christ's part, is spontaneous, and on man's, consentaneous. "In Whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." It grows from Christ, but it grows in unity with our consenting affections. Christ never violates human freedom, but works in it, with it, and by it. "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" "Ask and ye shall receive." "According to your faith be it unto you." He would open and develop in us much more of His purity and truth, goodness and beauty; but He waits for our desire, and by processes of wondrous wisdom and gentleness, He seeks to beget in us that desire.

The growth of the new kingdom.

If the spirit of the flesh in us be ardent, or the spiritual affections be lukewarm, the growth of the new nature will be retarded, or suspended. If it be necessary to receive Christ, in order to salvation, it is equally necessary to walk in Him, in a spirit of watchfulness and prayer, in order to growth.

Law of growth.

Inasmuch as "all the building is growing in the Lord," and according to His order, it will, in the end, not only be a glorious temple of humanity, but marvellously adapted for the indwelling and manifestation of God. "I will dwell in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." I will fill them, and they shall represent My fulness.

"The whole building," the redeemed of every generation, growing more and more into unity with each other, and with

An inspiring thought.

Christ, and through Him, with all the hidden powers of the Godhead, is a work which is every way worthy of an Almighty Father. To what glory, to what beauty, will the kingdom grow? to what wisdom will its members attain? what will be their powers? what their fellowship? what their individual freedom of action? what their service and end, as one empire in the Son, and in the Father?

Hindrances.

At present there is much in human souls, much in the constitution of nature, and very much in the strife of the great spirit-world, to hinder the full development of God's purpose in Christ. But all hindrances have their appointed limit. In due time, they will all be over-mastered, or removed; and God and the redeemed race will come into perfect relationship. Hitherto, not even Heaven has had any example of such a unity. The unspeakable intimacy of the relation between the Eternal Word and the Father will repeat itself, and come into play in the whole body of Christ. In it the powers of the Divine Nature will have a creaturely fellowship, to the ever changing, ever growing delight of its members. It will be the wonder-triumph of Love.

The law of
reverence.

But intimacy with God, and the delights of communion, will only deepen, and never abate the spirit of reverence. Nearness to God will be power and bliss, but it will also be awe. Israel remaining in the remote camp soon sank into irreverence; but the reverence of Moses, going up to the mount of direct fellowship, grew at every step. Irreverence is always a sufficient evidence of distance. Those who are nearest to God, and who embody most of His life, will always be the humblest and most reverential of His children.

IV.

WITH HUMILITY AND PATHOS, PAUL ADMIRES THE GRACE,
WHICH HAD CALLED AND QUALIFIED HIM TO MAKE KNOWN
THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, WHICH ARE NOW ACCESSIBLE
TO ALL MEN. CHAP. III. 1-13.

CHAP. iii. 1-6.—*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, 2 If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given me to you-ward: 3 How that by Revelation He made known to me the mystery; as I have before written in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may be able to perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; 5 Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel.*

These words, from the second verse, are only a part of one of the weighty parentheses, which distinguish the letters of this apostle. The whole parenthesis runs down to the end of the 13th verse. When he commenced this passage, he was going to write what we do not discover till we come to the 14th verse. His heart was too full; neither his tongue, nor his pen, was swift enough for his soul. He laboured to utter himself, but the generation of his thoughts was too rapid. Before he could put down his current thought, another rushed upon him, and another, insisting on embodiment. His one subject, the new world which he has found in Christ Jesus, is too vast, too full, too wonderful for words. His mind and heart are equally captivated by what he briefly calls “the mystery of Christ.” Parenthesis.

All for Christ.

He has heard Gamaliel discourse of God and sacred things, he has read the Grecian philosophy, he has surveyed the visible heavens and earth, but his present knowledge transcends all these. God is opened to him; man is opened to him; and God's plan, which comprehends the unity of all things, is opened to him. Henceforth he is, and must be, the servant of this mystery. Christ is the centre and soul of the mystery. In Him it is finished. The unity of all things which is reigning in Him, will be developed and triumphant in the whole universe. "For me to live is Christ." Christ is his all. His freedom is for Christ, his bonds are for Christ, his time and his strength are for Christ, his reason and passions for Christ, his joy and his tears for Christ, his death, and his life after death, shall be for Christ. "I Paul, the prisoner of the Lord." Could he be indifferent to Jesus Christ, he might instantly be at large, and in high esteem. Strictly, he was in prison for Jesus Christ. His chain was sacred to him. It was a sign to him of the strength of the bond, which had made him one with the Son of God. Stronger than iron, and more lasting than the world, is the chain of perfect love, which binds him to Christ.

A sufferer for the Gentiles.

Had he been narrow and exclusive in his spirit, he would have been honoured and beloved. For his impartiality, he was hated of his countrymen. Had he shewn a strong bias in their favour, and been prejudiced against men of other nations, they would have borne with him, and his Christianity too. He is writing to the Gentiles, and he reminds them that he is in prison, as their apostle. He had not only given to all men the Gospel, but he had given it to them, free from Jewish associations. "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ *for you Gentiles.*" There is too much reason to fear, that, even in our own day, the grand offence of many a noble servant of Jesus Christ, is the breadth of his Christianity. Let a man sell himself to some one church, or party, warmly plead for his own party, exhibit the errors and defects of all other churches, and he will live and die in the affections of his people. On the other hand, a man who declines specially to own this church,

or disown the other, who looks with an evil eye on none, but embraces all in the broad spirit of his impartial love, will certainly find that there are grave charges still against the Spirit of Christ, as distinct from the spirit of party. He may calculate on the cold suspicions and hard judgments of the self-loving churches. Let him count the cost, and, if he can, declare himself for Christ and humanity; or, if he be not able, then for Christ and his own party.

It is no small praise to say that Jesus is the King, Whose subjects have always found positive pleasure in suffering for Him. To be disowned and set at nought for His sake are their honour and joy. In their esteem, no distinction could equal that of being partakers of Christ's sufferings. "We glory in tribulation." While suffering for His sake, the spirit of glory and of God rests upon them. What are the honours and rewards of party-zeal compared with this?

Paul presumes that his Gentile friends have heard that a special dispensation of the grace of God has been committed to him on their behalf. "If you have heard of the administration of grace which is given me to you-ward:" how that when I was ignorantly His persecutor, the Lord Himself appeared to me in the way, called me by name, and commissioned me to bear His Name to you Gentiles. Neither by those who were apostles before me, nor by any man was the gospel revealed to me; but "by revelation He made known to me the mystery." "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, nor was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ." Gal. i. 11, 12. The recognition of the supernatural element in Paul's conversion will enable us at once to account for the intensity of his spirit, the fulness of his illumination, the authority of his apostleship, the multitude of his labours, and his overflowing joyfulness under all his persecutions and sufferings. He has received a direct communication of light and power from Christ. He has already referred to this "in few words," in chap. i. 9, 10. The secret of God has been made known to him, namely, that it is "according to His

Paul's
revelation.

good pleasure" to bring about the unity of all things in heaven and earth, by Christ Jesus.

Special provisions were necessary for the opening of the gospel to the heathen world. As the kingdom of heaven was equally for all nations, it was important that it should have no Jewish bias, nor peculiarity. The immediate apostles of our Lord were unable to divest themselves of their national predilections. They had known "Christ after the flesh;" and both in their partialities and prejudices they were decidedly Jewish. The Lord would have an apostle who had not known Him after the flesh; and He would make him wholly independent of His earlier apostles. His new apostle should receive his knowledge and authority directly from Himself "by Revelation." He would make him clearly to see and understand that the Gospel is older than Judaism, and that there is no reason whatever why it should have a Jewish tincture. God always knew His own purpose, and therefore, before it fell into a Jewish mould, revealed its universality. Eighteen years before Paul wrote this Epistle, he had been, in spirit, caught up into Paradise, and returned full of the wealth of her wisdom, and of her all-embracing motherly love. The Scripture, foreseeing that God would give His righteousness to the heathen through faith, preached before (some centuries prior to the giving of the law) the gospel to Abraham, saying, "In thee shall *all nations* be blessed." As the heathen had never been fettered by the yoke of Judaism, it was our Lord's will that they should never be warped by it, but receive the Gospel as the primary and original grace of God to all men. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was *added* because of transgressions, till (Christ) the seed should come, to Whom the promise was made."

Gal. iii. 8.

Gal. iii. 19.

The burdensomeness and servility of Jewish types were given because of the grossness and hardness of that people's heart. The yoke of bondage was so ordered, that it might fulfil the office of a conducting slave (schoolmaster) to Christ. The Gentiles, who had not been subject to this magisterial slave, though in a certain sense farther off from the knowledge

of God, were better prepared for the freedom of the gospel. The Jews were too proud of their "schoolmaster" to resign him for Christ. The conducting slave enslaved them. Few of them were conducted to Christ, and those who were, stopped short of the liberty wherewith Christ would have made them free. In our own day, there are many who impose Jewish conditions on the gospel. They cannot imagine the pure freedom of Christ. The spirit of sonship in the heart is too simple and heavenly for them. They prefer a considerable amount of ceremonial slavery. There are Jewish, Romish, and Anglican minds, who, like the Negro, are of opinion, that by gorgeous apparel they can set off the Divine simplicity. And God permits them to indulge their taste, and, if they please, to name themselves after St Peter; but Paul's gospel to the nations is unencumbered wisdom, a spirit of life in the inner man, "Christ in you the hope of glory."

He contends that philosophers are vainly so called, so long as their wisdom is derived from visible things. Until the Hidden Wisdom, which is Christ, is revealed to them, they are "in bondage under the elements of the world," duped by principles and reasonings which are fallacious, and remarkable alike for sensuous acuteness, and spiritual dulness of understanding. "In other ages," the deepest purpose of God, "the mystery of His will," "was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed by the Spirit." The reserve which God used for thousand years after thousand years, should suggest to us caution in limiting the purpose of God. God has doubtless unspeakable things still in reserve. The Jewish people were made to feel that there was an awful distance and separation between them and God; but of His nearness to them, under their distance and darkness, they had little suspicion. That the condemning power of sin was the condition of their own nature, that God's whole heart was towards all nations, that He was resolved, by the Sun of His Love, to break through the sin-cloud between Himself and them, and to establish with them direct relationship, were more than they could imagine. That, before the foundation of the world, the Son

The reserve of
God.

of God had made the difficulty of sin His own, that in the fulness of time, He would come in human nature, to be made sin for men, purge away their sin by His death, and by His glorification become wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption unto all who should receive Him, were impossible conceptions to them. But the special conceit of their self-love was, that they, of all men, were the favourites of God. When, therefore, God disclosed the fact that He is "no respecter of persons,"—that the Gentile world is as dear to Him as the Jewish,—that the gospel of His Heart is equally for all nations, the Jew took offence, and refused to enter a kingdom, which gave to him no distinction above other men.

Even Peter was compelled to bear witness to the Divine Impartiality, the absolute equality of God's love to all men. "God Which knoweth the hearts, bare the Gentiles witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did to us; and put *no difference between us and them*, purifying their hearts by faith." "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common, or unclean." Of all that is worth inheriting, or hoping for, the Gentiles are fellow-heirs with the Jews. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the Same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." If the Jews will not be "fellow-heirs, and of the Same Body" with the Gentiles, they cannot be heirs of God at all. It is only just that the exclusive spirit should be self-exclusive. Not only exclusive Jews, but exclusive Christians will find at last that they have excluded themselves. "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Nothing removes men farther from God than to believe that they alone are acceptable to Him. These are the proud that He knoweth afar off. In their heart they thank God that they are not as other men, and thereby give evidence against themselves that they are captives in the cold house of their own self-love, and strangers to the grace of God.

Acts xv. 7-9.

Acts x. 28.

Rom. x. 12.

Matt. vii. 2.

CHAP. iii. 7, 8—*Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me, by the effectual working of His power. 8 Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable riches of Christ.*

It is beyond the power of those who were apostles before him, to make a party-man of this new apostle. If they are satisfied with their course, he is satisfied with his. He has the judgment of God, and the judgment of men will not move him. "The gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me as the gospel of the circumcision was to Peter; (for He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles;) And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision." And having received authority from the Lord Himself, for his un-Jewish gospel, he manfully defended his distinctive mission, and "gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour," to the advocates of the Judaic gospel. "These who seemed to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me; (God accepteth no man's person,) for they who seemed to be somewhat added nothing to me." I derived no advantage whatever from those who were apostles before me.

The Gospel
freed from
Judaism.

Gal. ii. 7-9.

Gal. ii. 6.

So far from Peter having any superior authority in these early days, it is specially Peter that is withstood to the face, and even *blamed* by this new apostle. In the absence of certain persons, Peter was much influenced by the freedom of Paul, but as soon as the shadow of James came before him, he repented of his freedom. "Before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, *he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.*" And the other Jews dissembled with him, inso-

Gal. ii. 12, 13. much that Barnabas, (my friend and colleague,) was carried away with their dissimulation." There was clearly a time-serving spirit, and the fear of man, in Peter, which brought him into a snare. The Romish Church, perhaps not inconsistently, recognizes Peter as the fountain-head of her authority. But it is of God that Paul is made independent of Peter. That His new apostle might be the better qualified to preach the gospel of His Son to the heathen, God wrought in him by His own immediate power and grace, rather than through Peter.

The spirit of Paul must awake once more.

This argument of Paul has not yet fulfilled its last service. It will have to be used yet, with new and overwhelming effect, against the growths and pretensions of ages. We shall have to sweep on one side the ritualism of three thousand years, and clear away whole mountains of imposing solemnities, hierarchical and materialistic solemnities, that the simplicity and majesty of God's Promise may be given to men. The verbose and laborious methods of a fleshly Church, even though it should include Moses and St Peter, cannot disannul, and shall not for ever becloud, the Promise of Life which, long before Judaism arose, was "confirmed of God in Christ." The blast of the trumpet is at hand. God will muster His hosts to the battle. "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." There is an ecclesiasticism, (venerable perhaps, not only in this world, but also in Hades,) which must be utterly broken up. What a day for arrogant and exclusive churches, when their heaven passes away! "This word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which are mutable, as of things which are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Heb. xii. 26, 27.

Paul can never cease to wonder at the Divine power, which so suddenly and completely delivered him from himself, and from his age and nation:—that from being a fiery and intolerant Jew, he should be made an apostle of the impartial gospel of God to the heathen:—that he, of all men, should be made to say that Jew and Gentile are fellow-members of one Kingdom! I, who was exceedingly mad against the name of Jesus,—I, who was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injuri-

ous, that I should be chosen, and called, "to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." If any one ever felt it to be quite impossible that he should be a disciple of Jesus, it was this man. But we must admire the wisdom which makes the greatest preacher of free grace, himself an example of its freedom and power. "I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

1 Tim. i. 16.

Unsearchable
riches for men
of all nations.

What more can the ambition of men desire to hear, than that unsearchable riches are accessible to them? Jews desire to be rich; Gentiles desire to be rich. In all the eternal essentials of humanity they may be rich. God wishes men to be rich. He will have riches commended to them. Paul was expressly raised up, and qualified, to preach to men their own unsearchable riches;—that by a marriage-covenant they are entitled to the wealth of the Son of God. To preach the Gospel is to make known to men the sources, and the boundlessness, of their treasure. It is but a proof of the more than royal descent of men, that there are no limits to their desire of possession. The grief is that they allow themselves to be allured from their "true riches," to the shadowy and fictitious riches of material substance; and that not simply for the sake of use, but for the sake of glory. God proposes to make man rich in wisdom, rich in goodness, rich in joy, rich in beauty, rich in influence; and to make him essentially and unchangeably rich, by making his wealth inseparable from his being. The world is but a false answer to man's desire for wealth. God warns him of the temptation, and reveals to him the Infinite Mine where all the gold is human and eternal. As all material gold, before it came into the possession of men, was first in the earth, so were all the spiritual riches of the angels derived from the Son of God. The Maker of all things must be unsearchably rich. There must be more in His nature than in all things which He has made. There must be worlds on worlds of undiscovered wealth in Him Who made the worlds. All lovely and precious things are but hints of the riches of the Son of God.

Floral loveliness, the fruits of the earth, the splendour of metals, the lights in precious stones, and the glories of the firmament, are the material shadows of His wealth. The beauties of Paradise, and the wonders of the heavens, are higher manifestations of His riches. How can one help being ambitious "to win Christ, and be found in Him?" to exchange the straitness of one's own nature, and the thinness and poverty of one's own righteousness, for the resources of His nature, and the riches of His righteousness! The man, Christ Jesus, was the Son of God, infinitely humiliated. If, therefore, you still think of Him "after the flesh,"—that is according to the limits of His fleshly manifestation,—you do both Him and your own spirit a great wrong. Let us be grateful for His Incarnation, but let us carefully distinguish between the infinitude of His power and glory, and the veil of His flesh. "The unsearchable riches" pertain to the boundlessness of His Divine Nature, as the Only Begotten of the Father. His glorified Humanity is the Supreme unitive expression of these riches, and the channel of their communication to men. The Son of God and Son of man, being made one, man and boundless opulence can never more be divorced. The like title which a wife has to the wealth of her husband, men have to the wealth of Christ; and much more, for the wife is less one with her husband than the Divine and human natures are one Christ.

Not only "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," but all the elements of true being are man's, since Christ is man's. The eternity of His nature, the harmony of His powers, the glory of His righteousness, and the humility of His goodness, are made man's. Christ will not only be unutterably lovely and precious to all beholders for ever; but His glories will be seen in them. He will make them increasingly rich in themselves, that by the very wealth of their excellence they may attract more of His excellence. The more freely they receive, the more freely will they give. Christ's object is to make them real princes of God, that whithersoever they go, they may ray out divine influence, giving and giving, without

consideration and without loss. As the sun gives freely what he has, and what he is, and yet is none the poorer, in like manner will the children of God be always giving out the virtues of Christ, yet be always overflowing.

All the members of Christ will inherit and dispense His riches, but diversely; no one possessing precisely the same measure, or the same combination of virtues as another. The endless variety of glorified men will be an open, and ever opening, manifestation of the riches of God.

And contrariwise from worldly riches, which bring care to their possessor, the heavenly riches will deliver from care. In the kingdom of Christ, the greater the opulence, the greater the freedom. "If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed." The "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" will be so much internal power, not oppressing, but carrying the owner. The depth of your rest, the exuberance of your joy, the force of your influence, the manifoldness of your service, and the charm of your appearance, will be in proportion to your divine wealth.

By penitence and faith, by love and desire, let us open our souls to Christ, that we may inherit substance. "I am the Lord thy God; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Psal. xxxi. 10. "Riches and honour are with Me; durable riches and righteousness. I cause those that love Me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." "Buy of Me gold that thou mayest be rich." "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." All the philosophies of the world, and all the powers of nature, are of meagre significance, compared with the riches of Christ. As the universal Son of God, He carried in Himself before the creation, the whole possibility of Heaven and earth. As the Son of Man, and "the First-born from the dead," He is the beginning of the new creation. As the unity of all things in Himself, He is the First-fruits unto God of the final harvest of redemption. He is in Himself God's first means, and last end.

Prov. viii. 18,

21.
Rev. iii. 21.

Col. ii. 8.

Missing right:
reason and
wealth.

By wandering up and down, by roaming through earth and sky, by ransacking all history, men do but miss their right reason, and their wealth. They pick up fragments of the great wreck, and walk in a museum of death. Cruel mistake. They resign God's Gospel, for a patch-work made up of the shreds and tatters of helpless nature. They turn "from the unsearchable riches of Christ," to a poor creation that cannot lift itself out of vanity. It is vain, therefore, to look to the hills or plains, to the light, or darkness of nature, for salvation. Christ is salvation. He is perfect Man, and makes perfect men. To be in Him, is to be wise, to be in Him, is to be rich, to be in Him is Eternal life. Whatever you are, if you are not in Him, your knowledge is fatuous and incoherent, and your course downwards to incapacity, and fruitless endeavouring.

CHAP. III. 9-13.—*And to make all men see what is the dispensation (οἰκονομία not κοινωμία) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, Who created all things. 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies, might be known, by the means of the church, the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which He wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In Whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him. 13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.*

Creation not
hitherto
complete.

Whatever creatures may have thought, it is clear that God has never yet regarded the creation as in a final or completed condition. It is natural that men should look upon their heavens and earth as finished; and as a constitution of things appointed to serve for a time, they are finished; but in relation to God's original design, they will yet have to undergo marvellous changes. It is probable that, prior to the great angel-fall, the angels looked upon their heaven as finished and perfect; but God knew otherwise. He carried in Himself a

purpose which no angel knew. That purpose is at length somewhat opened, both to men and angels, but it is by no means carried out. It is both worthy of God and advantageous to His creatures, that the universe should be perfected by their co-operation, and the future processes of ages. Myriads of myriads of ages could be occupied in no better way than in enriching, maturing, and harmonizing the whole house, which God and all His children are to inhabit and enjoy for ever. Indeed it is incomprehensible that a house which is composed of countless orders of creatures, each one of whom has a separate, individual will, should hastily, or soon, realize its finally balanced relationships. It is surely the praise and glory of God's plan, that it requires cycle after cycle, and dispensation after dispensation, for its development.

In Himself, the plan was perfect, but apart from the long and manifold experiences of His creatures it could not be fulfilled. To be wrought in His Son was one thing, but to be wrought out in the wills and thoughts of His children, and in the condition of the creation, was a very different thing. He knew that only through failure, and out of failure, the finally steadfast and harmonious condition of things (the kingdom which cannot be moved) would grow.

The failure and misery of self-will, and all the mistakes of creatures, will contribute both to the strength and the joy of the final house of God. The craving of infinite Love will be satisfied. In the Incarnation, Conflict, and Victory, of the Logos, the beginning of the end has come, and His reign (being the reign of all things in unity) will bring in the Father's first idea, namely, the absolute perfectness and enduring order of His creation.

In proportion to the magnitude of a work, very considerable progress must be made, before persons who are looking on from without, are able to form any idea of the design. Till a comparatively recent date, no one on earth, nor any one in heaven, had the slightest conjecture of the work which God has set Himself to do. "No one in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look

Rev. v. 3.

thereon." Jesus, the First-born from the dead, is the Opener of the book.

Paul's insight
into the
mystery.

Very unexpectedly to himself, by the effectual working of God's power, marvellous insight was given to Paul into the mystery. With unfeigned humility, he declares that he, "less than the least of all saints," has been expressly illuminated and qualified by the Lord Jesus, "to make all men see the mystery which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God." To "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ," was only one branch of the office and service to which he was called. "Unto me is this grace given, that I should preach," &c., &c.; "*and to make all men see,*" &c., &c. In him, the loftiest powers of thought were consecrated to their loftiest use. He was the chosen instrument and channel of the Divine Wisdom to the minds of all nations, for all time. Specially through him, men have received higher and clearer views than were ever before known, of the eternal plan, according to which God is working, and will work. As no other apostle did, or perhaps could, he was made to conceive the vast bearings of the present dispensation, which is the revelation of the harmony of God's purpose, and the exposition of the dark parable of nature. "He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the nations," "*to open their eyes,*" &c., &c. "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Though greatly revealed to him, he still calls it "the mystery," for it has unfathomable depths and incomprehensible breadths. It has not only bearings on the past and future of our own world, but also upon all spirits and angels. Its scope is known only to God. The most far-seeing creatures are even yet incapable of a worthy thought of His Reconciliation, comprehending, as it does, all material and spiritual things in one plan and purpose. Only a few solitary chords can be struck of that great Harmony, which God has always contemplated and cherished, as the end to be brought about between Himself and His creation. Gifted minds would scarcely study so severely and contentedly the mere phenomena of the present temporal form of nature, if they were not

Acts ix. 15;
xxvi. 18, 19.

blind to that richer field of investigation which is opened to us in God's revealed purpose of universal Harmony.

Angels are students here, earnestly bent on learning, if possible, the notes of the ultimate chorus, not simply of heaven and earth, but of all things and God. They are more than willing to enter into the human school of Divine mysteries. Even under the old typical dispensation, the cherubim were represented with heads inclined downward,—suggesting that it was already known in the Heavenly Court, that God is preparing His chief work *below*. He is not redeeming men for their sakes only, but for His own sake, and for heaven's sake also. To all Principalities and Powers, the peculiar Dominion of Jesus Christ, is to be the mirror of mirrors, for reflecting the manifoldness of the Divine Nature. Paul says: The mystery which from the beginning hath been hid in God, is revealed unto men, “*to the intent, that now unto the Principalities and Powers in the heavenlies, might be made known, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.*” Hitherto they have known but little of the richly various (πολλὴ ποικιλία) wisdom of God. The Son of man draws together the elders of heaven and the children of time. His work, as the Restitutor of all things, (because of its centrality and universal bearings,) mightily attracts all spirits, not only the unfallen, but the fallen. From the death and ascension of Christ, the universe has been dated anew. From that great crisis of spiritual wrath, from that great triumph of Eternal Love, all things in heaven, and all things in earth, and all things in hell, are advancing towards a new issue. The ascension of Christ has made heaven higher and greater than it was before. The new height, as a new centre, is making a new circumference. Heaven is intensely interested in this new opening of God's wonders, and diligently co-operating with Christ in His work.

Angels—
scholars of the
kingdom of
Christ.

The powers of hell likewise perceive the ultimate effect of Redemption on their condition, and are stirring up all their powers of malice and subtlety to oppose and retard it. They clearly foresee that when they can no longer embody their passions in mankind, and no longer find any outlet for their

Redemption
and hell.

fiery might in the creatures and elements, the reaction of their own malignant natures on themselves will bring upon them a new fierceness of torment. That this issue is viewed with unutterable horror in hell, we learn from their own complaint: "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Already they felt the sharpness of their own wrath beginning to roll back on them, but they knew the day of doom was not yet. If the presence of Christ in the weakness of our flesh occasioned them new torment, well may they dread the full end of His Incarnation, in the redemption of mankind, and the glorification of the earth. For the present, they find a bath of assuagement in the natural souls of men, and in the elements of the world. Not until all their fire and wrath are pent up in themselves will they have any experience of the horribleness of their condition. This new beginning, or the shutting up of hell in hell, is what they dread as "the judgment of the great day." The lessons which they will learn through the kingdom of Christ are the hopelessness of rebellion, the adequacy of the Son of God to put down all contrary rule, authority, and power, to reduce all enemies under His feet, and, at the same time, to secure immense accessions of power, bliss, and glory to the heavens of obedient creatures. In the empire of redeemed men they will see a harmony which embodies "all things," a kingdom which, to eternity, will be a record and monument of the all-sufficiency both of the goodness and wisdom of God. While in their own condition, and in the darkness and desolation around them, they will be made to see and taste the hideous fruit of their own self-will.

Our angel
friends.

The Heavenly angels are wholly with us, as friends and fellow servants, in the new kingdom of the Son of God. They know that they have yet to be perfected. They have their own wisdom, but they know that they have a great wealth of wisdom and knowledge yet to acquire. There is not an angel in heaven whose heart and mind are not drawn to that book of wonders, which the Lamb once slain is opening.

Mutual
sympathies
preparatory
to union.

He is at once attracting all the heavenly powers, and drawing upward the thoughts and hearts of men. The inter-

communication between heaven and earth is unceasing. This invisible communion of thought and affection is preparatory to manifest union. The earth being Hephzibah to heaven, and heaven being Hephzibah to the earth, in the end, they cannot fail to be mutually Beulah to each other. The marriage celebration when it comes will be the greatest day which the universe has ever known. All the redeemed, whether in earth or heaven, are looking forward to this day with tender desire. All the angels are looking forward to it with equal desire. Christ, as the Son of God, and the Son of man, is looking forward to it, as to His recompense. The final union of heaven and earth, resulting in accessions of wisdom and strength to the angels, and innumerable fruits and services to the whole creation, was precisely "the joy that was set before Him."

As Paul was specially raised up and qualified to help men to see into the mystery, which from the beginning had been hidden in the Divine Nature, there can be no doubt that God has provided, and will yet provide, richly gifted and illuminated men, whose calling it shall be to open, to the primitive inhabitants of Heaven, those new depths and aspects of His Nature, which the Incarnation, and the whole process of Redemption have evolved.

Let me add a brief extract from a letter received from a friend as this exposition was being prepared for the press. "The Church is designed in God's eternal purpose to show forth, and make known, in ages still to come, both to angelic principalities and powers, and fallen ditto, the products of the manifold wisdom of God. None but Christ, and they who are supremely Christ's, can possibly do this. They will fulfil the type of the Aaronic priesthood. The present dry things will be made to blossom in them abundantly. Their chief mission and delight will consist in making known the hidden things of God."

In virtue of the Son of God's life in them, and their life in Him, believers have not only an introduction, or access to the heavenly world, but complete rest and assurance in the presence

The bearing of
men before
the angels.

of the angels. "In Him we have access, with confidence." The meekness and humility of true Christians, therefore, are a veil of God drawn over the power and glory of their condition. The world judged of Christ from His outward appearance: in the glory of His inner nature, "they knew Him not. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." The distinction, which Paul calls "our boldness," before the angels, is but the noble bearing of the King's children. Were Christians only *reckoned*, or treated as God's children, they would, without doubt, be awkward and constrained in the presence of angelic dignities and powers. But being *made* children by a participation of Christ, they will enter upon their inheritance with an open, artless, assurance. Not as strangers will they take their places in the midst of the heavenly orders, but with the ease and confidence of divine sons returning home.

In Christ Jesus we are not merely saved, but greatly saved. We are not only saved from sin, but from the timidity and pitifulness of a state of pardon. The Son of God endows all His saved with His own Princeliness. No vestige of servility will remain in them. "If the Son make you free, *ye shall be free indeed*." "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear." The confidence of the saved in heaven will be God-sustained; for God will dwell in them, and they in God. It would be equally abhorrent to God, and painful to them, that, by a spirit of concession, they should be *reputed* perfect, or reputed anything that they are not. "The spirits of just men are *made perfect*." The spirit and glory of the Eternal Father and of Jesus, springing as from our own nature, in us, will give us a perfectly composed confidence in wearing the honours, and using the privileges of our Father's House. We shall shortly put away the manner and tone of beggars, and inherit the royalty and joyousness of our new nature. Doubt and hesitation will leave us, and the spirit of might fill us for ever.

Christ having given to us directness of access, even unto the

1 John iii. 1.

2 Tim. i. 7.

1 John iv. 18.

holiest things of the Heavenly mansions, let us use our privilege freely. We owe to Him assurance. Doubt dishonours Him. Why should we doubt His word? Why should we doubt the work which He accomplished for us, by His death, yea rather, by His entrance into heaven, in our nature? Let our faith be noble. Timidity is not faith. Neither by our speech, nor by our manner of coming before God, let us intimate, that after all, we are not quite confident about our right of approach. We may easily pain the angels, grieve Christ, and gratify Satan, by our hesitancy in using the new and living way, which is freely and righteously opened to us. It must vastly please Satan to see that the very creatures for whom Christ suffered, and now reigns in heaven, are still suspicious, and dubious about their access to God. Let him no longer see in us the spirit of slaves, but the spirit of sons. Our right of entrance is settled for ever. "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward." With an unfaltering step, let us draw nigh to God. Christ is our introduction. In no single approach let us forget, that in Him we have boldness, and confidence of access.

Hesitancy
dishonours
Christ.

Heb. x. 35.

We should freely allow the purpose of God, in Christ Jesus, to embrace us, and enter into joyful co-operation with His Spirit, that we may be made meet for our Inheritance. He has surely given us proof enough that "His delights are with the children of men." Let us implicitly rest in His affections, "and boldly say, The Lord is our Helper." Returning angels are not more welcome to their own heaven, than fallen men to the arms of Grace.

The confidence of our hope in Christ receives additional warranty, from the experience in life and in death of great multitudes; from the blood of the martyrs; and from the tribulations of the men, who were eye-witnesses of His glory. Paul charged his friends not to be disheartened by his sufferings for them, but to look upon his joyfulness therein, as an argument for the greatness and preciousness of their hope.

The sufferings
of believers
are our gain.

V.

ANOTHER PRAYER FOR THE STRENGTHENING AND ENLARGEMENT
OF BELIEVERS. CHAP. III. 14-19.

CHAP. III. 14-19.—*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Of Whom every family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That He would grant you according to the riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, —you having been rooted and grounded in love, 18 That you may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, 19. And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God.*

It does not require any special faith or courage to ask a Father to bless His own children. "You are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God," built into the Living Foundation, and growing unto a temple-kingdom in the Lord. By His own unsolicited grace, God has given to fallen men eternal sonship in His Son. And having raised them to this distinction, they are entitled to whatever His Spirit can do for them. "If you know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* shall your heavenly Father give good things to His children." Paul felt great liberty, therefore, in asking that his fellow heirs might become noble-minded and glorious characters. The more gifted and excellent they become, the more will the Father be glorified in them.

Matt. vii. 11.

The Root of
all Father-
hood.

Before we come to the substance of the prayer, we are called to contemplate God as the root and ground of all fatherhood. Of all fathers in heaven and earth He is the Father.

The stream of fatherhood leads up your thoughts to the source of fatherhood. You cannot think of a flowing stream, without also thinking of its origin and source. You cannot think of a branch, without thinking of its root. You cannot think of an Eternal Nature, as separate from His own Procession, or Only Begotten Son. And how could the Son of the Infinitely prolific Ground, or Father, be anything but the Beginning and Fountain of innumerable fathers of families?

"The whole family in *heaven and earth*." We often speak of the universe under the two great divisions of material and spiritual. The Bible never does this. It often joins "Heaven and earth" together, never Heaven and hell. But our distinction of material and spiritual, classes Heaven and hell together under one head, and the material creation under the opposite head. Whereas the separation between the spiritual and the spiritual, is far wider than between the spiritual and the material. The earth is far less at variance with the world of spirits, than the world of spirits is with itself. Heaven loves the earth, and carries it in her arms; but there is no such relation between Heaven and hell. Yet both Heaven and hell are spiritual. We must not then look upon matter as essentially at enmity against spirit. Matter may become an instrument of enmity, but it may also be, as it often is, a meek vessel and medium for Heaven's own life. The purest and noblest spirits in Heaven desire to enter into the closest and most friendly relationship with men on the earth. No intimacy can be sweeter than that between angels and men. It is like the intimacy of fragrance with the flower from which it breathes, or the intimacy of music with the harp, or that of soul and body. In the patient, loving, unobtrusive services which angels render to men, there is something very genial and family-like. They treat us as relatives, drawing near to us in our trials; and standing at the gates of death, they receive us with sisterly, motherly tenderness. But between angels and angels, instead of fellowship, there is mutual resistance, instead of neighbourly service, war. Heaven keeps watch over the earth, as over its nursery, but over hell, as over its enemy.

Heaven and
Earth.

The day hastens, when the earth will melt into perfect unity with Heaven, under the fervent heat of its descending glory, and redeemed men will come into open communion with their angel-friends. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," we are told, the men in Christ of the last generation will undergo their celestial transmutation.

Greatness of
Heaven,—

"*The whole family* in Heaven" is altogether too great and manifold for our imagination. Compared with some of her sister planets, the earth is a very little thing; but ten thousand solar-systems are as nothing compared with the mansions of Heaven. If the visible heavens are a countless host, who can speak of the elder and purer Heavenlies? The Heavens, which are sunned by the Face of God, not only comprehend the visible heavens, but all space. This celestial sphere, including its innumerable systems of angel-worlds, however distant and remote from each other, constitutes our Father's House.

incomprehen-
sible.

We must not suppose that God has any children in Heaven, or earth, who can comprehend the unity of His whole kingdom. Ages, and ages again, and cycles of ages, must elapse before certain branches will be brought into communication with other branches of the Divine family. God only knows all the distinct kingdoms and races of His household. "He calleth them all by names." If but a few of the kingdoms of the angels could be made to pass before us, the variety would only confuse us. Moreover, the power and glory of some of the higher and purer heavens would be too awful for us. The countless orders of God's House, and their distinctions, are a manifestation in part of His own Infinite nature.

πᾶσα πατριὰ.

If, instead of "the whole family in Heaven and earth," we read *every family* in Heaven and earth, the partition or distinction between the different races and orders of God's children is at once suggested. Πᾶσα πατριὰ, without an article, can scarcely be translated "the whole family." The children of God consist of multitudes of races; and the word πατριὰ implies that every distinct race has its own creaturely head, or father. A πατριὰ is a paternal descent, a race, derived from one head, as the human race from Adam. The people of Israel were

carefully classified according to the house of their fathers. (See Num. xxvi.) We have every reason to suppose that the same rule obtains in the Heavenlies. The angels under Michael, not only constitute a great and powerful angelic kingdom, but we are taught to regard them as "*his angels*." In other words, his kingdom is strictly a paternity. Gabriel is another prince-angel, or head of a race. It is only consistent to suppose that the universal family of the Almighty Father is composed of fathers and their children. The angelic creatures, which are spoken of under the titles of Thrones, Principalities, Dominions, &c., are surely fatherly heads of distinct races of angels. And this law explains how it was that the apostacy of the Archangel Satan was the apostacy of his whole order,—"*Satan and his angels*."

Monarchical-paternal government is universal. No other form of government would represent God, nor would any other be concentric and harmonic with His government. That which is central to all, namely, the Fatherhood of God, repeats itself throughout all orderly creations.

If this were not the law of God's whole creation, the generations of Heaven and earth could with no propriety be called "*every paternity* in Heaven and earth." The eternal Father is represented by innumerable fathers; and every kingdom of every governmental father derives its name from a distinction which he inherits from the Father of All. Every race, whether in Heaven or on earth, brings into manifestation some new principle, affection, or aspect of the Divine Nature. Families are not isolated individuals, but the descendants of their fathers, and therefore essentially members one of another: God Himself being the Father of all the families of the universe.

What can be more interesting than to contemplate the intelligent universe, as consisting of endlessly multiplied bonds of fatherhood and childhood; and all these held in the strong unity of One Divine Fatherhood and one Divine Sonship?

Family relationship is therefore a very sacred thing. Its root being not in the creation, but in God. And though we shall not find on earth any development worthy of its holy root,

Sacredness of
family relation-
ship.

nevertheless, the flower which fills the world with choicest fragrance is family affection. It is capable of becoming most heavenly, since the Eternal Father is Himself the spring of parental, as His Eternal Son is of filial love. Therefore, also, family affections are capable of ceaseless cultivation. There is nothing to hinder family love from becoming evermore deeper, stronger, and lovelier. If it be so strong and so precious among fallen creatures, what must it be among the perfect? If family life on the earth gives rise, as it often does, to a very paradise of courtesies and tender sanctities, what must family life be in the immediate Presence, and under the direct influence, of the Infinite Father and His Only Begotten Son? Christian parents and their children should know, therefore, that in their families they have not a little world, but a little heaven to cultivate. Their families derive their distinctions and peculiarities from relations in the Godhead. Their families have not only names in time, but in eternity. Every family in Christ is named according to its distinction, as a manifestation of a corresponding variety in the Divine Nature.

Heart-solace.

What a *solace to our hearts* is the assurance, that we shall never cease to be members of a family! The perfection of the great heavenly household is that it is a Household of households. We are born into a family, we grow up in a family, we die in a family, and after death, we shall not simply go into the great heaven, but to our own family, in our Father's House. "Abraham gave up the ghost and was gathered *to his people*." "Thou shalt go to *thy fathers* in peace," God had said to him. All in heaven will not know us, but *our own people* will know us. We shall go to them.

Gen. xxv. 8.

Babes.

We are but babes in the Household of God; and moreover, we are in a very humble part of His House, rather in an adjoining house than in the very House. But we are loved as babes, by our numerous kindred; and quite as much by our own in heaven, as by our own on earth. The sweet affections of our heavenly kindred are ever seeking to reveal themselves in our hearts. What are our family altars, but means of communication between families on earth, and families in heaven!

They unite with us in saying, "Our Father." And in the joy of our fellowship with Him, and with His Son Jesus Christ, they joy with us.

But the members of families on the earth should see to it, that they are members of the Household of God. Let there be no doubt touching their union with Christ, the First-born Son. Let them have clear evidences that they are born again, and partakers of Divine Nature. Members of Christian families, who are not personally in Christ, should lay it to heart that they are not as yet members of any heavenly household; and that they will be separated from their own families, unless they enter in at the door of grace, while they may. Has the door been open to you in vain? You have been resting in the affections of your parents and enjoying the comforts of their house; but are you with them in Christ, and members with them of their Eternal family?

A personal inquiry.

In most families of grown up sons and daughters, a great triumph remains to be achieved, in a spirit of real unity, and a play of freedom between parents and children, and children and parents. The distinction is so broad between the conditions of fatherhood and childhood, that a perfectly free unity would not be possible between them, if God were not Himself both Father and Son. But since the "One Spirit" which is given equally to parents and children, is a Spirit which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, not only is such a unity possible, but it is already perfect, in the Spirit which both parents and children receive from God.

The Old Testament closes with a reference to this subject. Unity between parents and children, is spoken of as a special sign of God's presence and working. So far as such unity prevails, the power of Heaven prevails in the Household.

"I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, after Whom every paternity in the heavens, and on the earth, is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit, in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," &c. The Prayer.

Again and again one pauses to wonder at the fulness of heart, and the corresponding exaltation of mind, from which this Epistle is written. "The prisoner of the Lord" evidently labours under a flood of inspiration. He writes as one breathless with haste, lest his supernatural wealth of thought should go unrecorded. His prayers are as if the whole ocean of Divine Love were seeking a passage through his heart.

Read again his prayer, chap. i. 15-23, and then this, iii. 14-21. The scope and sublimity of both are enough to strike angels dumb with wonder. In reviewing the things contained in them, we must break them up into fragments; and yet to be conscious of their compact unity and majesty, they must be read as single sentences, without a pause.

Such passages as these from the pen of our apostle suggest to us an interesting problem. How could he write, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," when the fact is that his writings are not simply rich, but profusely rich in "the *manifold* wisdom of God."

There are two answers to this question. Paul did not say, I am determined to know nothing of Jesus Christ except as crucified; but I am determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ, *and* Him crucified. To know Christ, was the same, in Paul's estimation, as knowing all the fulness of Divine wisdom and knowledge. The other answer to the difficulty is that Paul did not say to the Churches generally: I am resolved to speak of nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified; but to the Corinthian Church, he did write: "I determined not to know any thing among *you*, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Doubtless this is the most moving aspect, both of his own sin, and of the love of God, which you can present to an awakened and distressed soul. It has brought sudden and direct relief to the hearts and consciences of untold myriads. But it is greatly to the discredit of converts, when they abide at the beginning, and remain babes in knowledge. Every worthy disciple of Christ should surely apprehend the Son of God, as He was, before He came into the world, as He was, before the worlds were made. He should also know Him, as

He is now, the Glorious Centre of the heavenly world. It was certainly the rule of the apostles to dwell more on the resurrection of Christ than on His crucifixion.

We may be very thankful that all the churches of Paul's apostleship were not of the Corinthian order. Had they been, we should never have had such epistles in the New Testament as those to the Ephesians and Colossians. And Paul plainly enough told the Corinthian church that it was to their reproach, that, when speaking or writing to them, he could only treat of the elementary knowledge of Christ and Divine things. "I could not speak to *you*, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes [and tyros] in Christ." You were not able to receive higher truth, neither yet now are ye able. You have divisions among you, and a party spirit. He even thanks God that he baptized almost none of them. He never felt much relation to them, nor were they greatly attached to him. Many of them preferred Apollos. When with *them*, Paul kept himself very much to himself, and would not be chargeable to any of them. He took freely from other churches, because he would receive nothing from the Corinthians. Their low estimate of him compelled him to what he calls a line of folly, namely, to magnify his own apostleship, and to boast of his revelation and labours.

Acts iv. 2 ;
xvii. 18.

The Corinthians were not only carnal and crude in their knowledge, but clearly mistaken as to the very nature and character of salvation. Judged of, according to the low standard of ordinary morality, they were a very disreputable church. They had abominable vices among them, and no discipline. Even at the Lord's table they were disorderly, and gave sad evidence of impurity, coarseness of character, and want of reverence.

Paul might well say that towards the Corinthians he would practise reserve as to the sublimer things of our faith.

I have no doubt that not only in the Corinthian church, but in the Church in general, low views of Christ, and sensuality and worldliness of life, will be found together.

1. The prayer now before us reveals God's purpose to feed the inner man with immortal strength.
2. This strength of Immortality is Christ in the heart.
3. Christ in the soul is not only the fountain of Eternal life, but the spring of all Divine knowledge.
4. The Christ-germ sown in the soul will develope, and develope, until we are filled up to a correspondence with "the fulness of God."

It did not accord with the inspiration given to our Apostle that he should simply pray the Father that we may be strengthened by the might of His Spirit; but he must needs ask Him, to build up His might in us, "*according to the riches of His Glory.*" It was less Paul praying than the Spirit of Christ praying in him. Unless he had been God-moved, he would have felt that such a prayer was too presumptuous to come from any creature's mouth. But the Spirit knoweth all things, yea, even the deep things of God.

For a time, the strength of temporal nature and the strength of God dwell together in the soul, not in harmony, but in strife. But the strength of nature must decrease and the strength of God increase, until we possess no other might than that of His Spirit in us. The might of nature has been utterly broken and vanquished in the death of Christ, that the Power of God, "according to the riches of His Glory," may fill Him, for us. He, as our Head, is "declared to be the Son of God with power, by His resurrection from the dead." The inner man, strengthened by the might of His glory, is prepared for the indwelling of God.

The inner man
lost in the
outer man.

Under the robust health of the outer man, the inner man often lies in the weakness of death. Natural men have no knowledge of the inner man. The real man, which Christ comes to seek and to save, is lost in the outer man. His spiritual understanding is quenched in his natural understanding, and the Divine Love is cold and dead in his natural love. The Last Adam is a Life-giving Spirit. Christ inspeaks His Life into the inner man, and raises him from the dead.

The strength
of immortality.

Strengthened by this might, we are superior to temptation ;

we are tranquil under the sorest trials ; and in death itself, we are above the reach of death. It is the strength by which the immortals live. It is the Spirit of "The Lord of Glory" infused (εἰς τὸν ἕσω ἀνθρώπου) into the man that is within. As unperceived as the strength of the sun entering into the heart of the forest, Christ feeds the inner man of those who love Him, with the might of His glory. Blessed is the man, in whom death shall find this glorious might. What aileth thee, Death, that thou openest right and left, and makest a way, that man may pass through thee to the immortals ?

All the riches of the Father's Glory in Christ Jesus are riches of might for the inner man of believers. The supply is infinite. Man is for God. God is for man. Let us not, therefore, be afraid to discover our need. We should rather pray that we may know how immense are our capacities for the riches of God. Whole firmaments of glorious power are incessantly poured through the Man Christ Jesus, and waiting to be drawn down into the souls of men. "Open thy mouth wide ; I will fill it." "Praise ye the Lord. Praise Him in the Firmament of His Power."

The supply.

The Power for which Paul prayed is earnestly bent on coming down, and possessing the earth. The desire of Christ to dwell in the souls of men is not less than was His desire to come in the flesh, and His desire impresses the whole atmosphere of heaven with a tendency man-wards. Christ and heaven are one in longing to deliver man from the vanity and misery into which he has fallen, and to fill him with glory and power.

It descends with great desire.

Unfeigned penitence presents a great attraction to this sweet power. "Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose Name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place ;" "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Happy the soul that has an habitual yearning to die to all sin : a strong current of Divine Power is ever flowing towards that soul.

Attract it.

Isa. lvii. 15.

The Power is Christ.—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." There is no other "spirit of might" for men

Christ, the Power of God.

than the Spirit of Christ. "To this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living." For only as He reigns in men can men reign in life. Apart from the Son of God, there is no power of endless life. *Endlessness* of life can only be in the unity of Powers which from eternity to eternity is generated in God from God. And this unity of all Powers is strictly The Son of God.

The only
saving faith.

Let us examine our faith in Christ by this test. Does He dwell in us by our faith? If He does not, our faith is vain. It will not benefit us to call Him Lord, Lord, if He does not rule as Lord over the inner man. He is truly the Saviour of men; but He has no other way of saving men than by acquiring whole and sole dominion in the house of the soul. If another spirit of life than His reigns within us, we may call Him Saviour, but He is not *our* Saviour. The only salvation which we want is salvation from the spirit of our own life, for we are only exposed to hell, because another spirit than that of God's Only Son prevails in us, and no one can live in Heaven, unless the Son of God be his life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." He is God's only Seed. Except in Him, and by Him, perfect human nature is an impossibility. To be saved and to be made partakers of perfect human nature are the same thing.

1 Jno. v. 12.

Love is faith's
root, or living
heart.

If Christ dwell in our hearts, we shall be "*rooted and grounded in Love.*" The one eternal root and ground of the Divine Nature must be rooted and grounded in every child and heir of God. God is Love. Faith which has not the living love of God for its root, is dead and inoperative; it leaves the soul in its old nature, unrenewed, and therefore unsaved. There is a faith which resembles carved work, definite, of goodly proportions, always alike, and consistent; but such faith serves no other purpose than to assert its own correctness. Such faith has no more power to root and ground the inner man in the life of God's Love, than the carved work of our churches has power to grow. If Christ dwell in our hearts, by faith, our faith will be a most real life, and our life

an everlasting spring. It is impossible that the all-creating Word should dwell in the soul, and not impart to it the prolific power of Divine Love.

From Divine Love, as the root and ground of the soul's life, comes all *spiritual perception*. I say spiritual, as distinct from intellectual, perception. Paul says: You will not be able to comprehend the love of Christ, unless you are first rooted and grounded in it. A spiritual understanding is the opened flower of the Divine Love-root. Light is Love's first-born child. Before one can enjoy the light of the world, he must be born of the world's love. And before we can be "*light* in the Lord," we must be "*in the Lord*," having a root and ground in us derived from Himself. Any such knowledge as the natural understanding is capable of deriving from the words of Scripture is by no means *spiritual* knowledge. In order to spiritual knowledge, *the light* of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, must as really shine into our hearts, as, in order to behold objects of nature, the light of the sun must shine into our eyes. If "Christ dwell in your hearts by faith," you will be "rooted and grounded in Love," and as a consequence, you will be able to comprehend spiritual things. A noble passage from the Philippians should be quoted here. "God is my witness how greatly I long after you all in the [motherly] affections of Jesus Christ." [*Ἐν σπλάγχνοις* fitly and strikingly expresses the fervour and the tenderness of Christ's Love, and of Paul's, in Christ. On these words, *Ἐν σπλάγχνοις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*, Bengel remarks: Not Paul, but Jesus Christ lives in Paul; wherefore Paul is not moved in the bowels of Paul, but of Jesus Christ.] "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge [*ἐν ἐπιγνώσει*] and in all perception [*πάσῃ ἀισθήσει*]; that you may distinguish the things which transcend." [*Ἐπεὶ τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τα διαφέροντα.*] Love, then, according to our Apostle, is the ground and mother of the perceptive faculty. Without fire there can be no effulgence, or radiance. As is the fire, will be the radiance. The source of mental illumination is the Son of God in the heart. It was surely inspiration which moved Paul to pray that his friends might be rooted and grounded

Perception
springs from
Love.

Phil. i. 8-10.

in love, *in order that they might be able to comprehend* the mysteries of their faith; but it was also pure philosophy. This I pray, that more and yet more you may abound in the spirit of love; that you may advance unto the full recognition and discernment of Heavenly things. "Love is the key which opens all the secrets of faith."

That "the Son of God's Love," is declared to be "the Light of men," is the revelation of an essential law, of a universal law. Every child of God carries in his heart his Father's Love, and in his mind the "marvellous light."

"Fellowship
with all
Saints" in
God's Love.

As a Son of God he is in sympathy "with all saints," and not merely with the saints of his own Church. The old limits of his affections are broken up, and he sees afar off. If, instead of walking in the breadth of his Father's Love, he walks in the enclosure of his own party, he certainly will *not* comprehend what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of his Father's Love. He must love "*all saints*," seek fellowship "*with all saints*," and be willing to learn of "*all saints*," or he will never find the way out of his narrow places into the love of Christ, "the breadth of which" is broader than every form and phase of redeemed humanity. "The length" is longer than all the ages and generations of men. "The depth" is deeper than the depth of our fall. Its height is the height of His whole Church, which runs up through all the heavens and above the heavens. But we must not suppose that even the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of human redemption are the measure of God's Love. It is broader than the universe, it is longer than all the generations of the angels who were before men, it is deeper than Hell, it is higher than the highest heavens. It "*passeth knowledge*."

How far then any one section of the Church must be from representing "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of the love of Christ." We should take heed, therefore, that our knowledge be not derived from any one division of the Church. We must not suffer Catholicism, so called, to deceive us, nor Protestantism to imprison us. The Church is divided, but the Son of God is One. For Christ's sake, we must not suffer our affections and sympathies to be shut up

within any one nation, or Church. No Church, known among men, includes "all saints." We must be fellow citizens of "all saints," learning and gathering something from them all, as pupils of Christ. Let us by all means be members of some one congregation, and call it "our own Church," if we wish; but let us not sacrifice the greater privilege of being members of the universal Church. Let us love Christ's Church, of which "our own Church" is but one branch. All the Churches have something to give us, and something which we need, to increase our knowledge of "the love of Christ." The royal law of love,—love to God and love to man, opens to us the direct path to universal perception. Let us lay aside our prejudices. They are barriers across the path of our progress. Only as we come into unity with "all saints," can we find, or realise, our own completeness. Why should we cut ourselves off from the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, of our inheritance? If we are Christ's, all things which all the Churches have, are ours. When Paul and Apollos, and Cephas, and all Churches, east and west, have enriched us with whatever they possess, there will still remain in Christ, worlds of unappropriated wisdom and love.

The Apostle prays that we may be carried beyond the past experience of all Saints, *even until we are "filled unto all the fulness of God."* The fulness of the whole Church is but as the confluence of a few streams, compared with the ocean of God's fulness. Nothing will satisfy the ardour of the Great Father's Love, short of each child being filled up to a fulness corresponding with His own. Each may embody the variety of the Divine Nature, with endless distinctions in measure, and manner. The divine virtues and affections may be in each, and yet each perfectly distinct from every other creature, in experience, service, and manifestation. To this end, the Spirit of Christ, in Whom all fulness dwells, is given to every child of God, for his enlargement, that he may be ever richer in goodness, in wisdom, in strength, and in every virtue. Clearly, we can only be brought into communion "with all the fulness of God," by being ourselves made in little what He is without measure.

The love of
God will carry
us beyond all
past ex-
perience.

VI.

THE DOXOLOGY. CHAP. III. 20-21.

CHAP. III. 20-21.—*Now unto Him that is able to do superabundantly beyond all things, that we ask, or think, according to the Power that is working in us,*
21 *Unto Him be glory in the Church, in Christ Jesus, unto all the generations of the age of ages. Amen.*

Lest we should charge him with extravagance, in praying for things unattainable, Paul hastens to transfer our thoughts, both from ourselves, and himself, to “the Power that is working in us.” With men, the things for which he has prayed, are impossible, but with God all things are possible. If God is working in us, and if it be His purpose, after death, still to work in us, each one of us must have a perfection in prospect, which it is not in our power to conceive. So far from having asked greater things, than can be fulfilled, Paul asserts that what God will do in us, and for us, exceeds every thing we can express, or imagine.

Thought is
bold, but not
bold enough.

We can ask great things ; we can think greater things ; but the greatness and glory of God require Him to exceed all our thoughts. We often pass judgment on the thoughts which flit through us, as being too bold and presumptuous to be uttered in prayer. Our thoughts are too daring for our faith. Our Lord, who knows the purpose of His Father, complains of the littleness of our faith. “O ye of little faith.” “How long shall I be with you ?” The possibilities of our souls are exceedingly beyond anything that we ever admit to ourselves. The soul has every sensuous power in herself and can be at one with the whole outer universe ; the soul has every spiritual power in herself, and she can be at one with all angels and

heavens ; the soul has deeper powers still, and she can be at one with God. The soul is the epitome and mirror of all things. We readily consent to the humiliation of being captives in mortal flesh, for we know not ourselves. We are slow to believe that we are susceptible of a very transcendent expansion, and glorification. But the work of the Divine Power in us will not only exceed, but abundantly exceed, all that we are able to think. Through a depressing, bitter sense of unworthiness, our prayers are timid ; our very thoughts are under bondage to the present degraded form of our nature. Our noblest conceptions are impregnated and hampered by the gross elements under which we have fallen. To come into this life is to die so great a death, that we have no hope of the recovery of our diviner senses, until we die once more. But in this living death into which we have come, and which we mistake for life, God allows not His purpose to be quenched. Nature presents to us no pattern of the substance and the powers of our future nature. Unless we can conceive the form and majesty of the Man Christ Jesus, in heaven, we cannot anticipate what we shall be, when He presents us, in His own image, to the Father. In the tabernacle of our mortal body we are incapable of the glory of God : therefore, we are, as it were, annihilated in death, that we may come as sons of God to the divine form of our being. For the same reason, nature herself is advancing to the day of her dissolution, that she also may recover her long lost unity and peace. And the heavenly regions themselves are undergoing, and will yet undergo, considerable modifications that they may be more capable of reflecting the perfectness of God. There is no heaven as yet, the glory of which is comparable to that unity of glory which meets and shines in Jesus Christ. This is the pattern to which the Power, that worketh in us, will assimilate us. Hitherto, no creatures have been filled up into a correspondence with "all the fulness of God." But this is precisely the eternal purpose which He is now accomplishing by His Son. Spring has its beauty, and summer its glory, but God's full idea is not realised till harvest.

We are hidden
from our-
selves.

Our final harvest in the kingdom of God is too full and glorious to become an idea. The shadowy forms of thought, presented to us, rather disguise than reveal the future. God will work out His own thoughts, not ours. He will not only answer our desires in full, but both make us, and give us, what has never "entered into the heart of man." Only by successive transformations, and the exaltation of our powers beyond every thing that we think possible, will God be able to reveal to us His Glory, and qualify us for fellowship with His own manifoldness.

We have floating thoughts of our future inheritance, but they are very indefinite. How can the caterpillar, while a caterpillar, imagine its winged and aerial condition? While subject to "this earthy," our ideas must needs be very vague concerning things, which Paul, having seen and heard, was not able to speak. But "the Hope set before us," is beyond anything which St Paul saw in vision. Our Saviour-King is preparing both a sphere, and a condition, of glory for us, transcending any present heaven.

His Power which is working in us is the germinating principle of our future humanity. He is Perfect Man, representing in Himself all the Fulness of God, and He will not rest from His works in us, until, in our measure, we are like Him. Then, from an inwrought resemblance of nature, we shall see Him as He is.

Divine Power
offers no
violence to our
Freedom.

The Power that is at work in us offers no violence to our independence of action. It brings forth the powers and peculiarities of each soul as silently, and with as little force, as the flowers of spring are opened from their roots. Under the inward pulse and persuasion of the Great Father's love-power, we leave behind us our sins, one after another. Our foolish thoughts, our hard littleness, and our unloveliness are taken from us in the same way. We outgrow ourselves, and yet at every moment we are ourselves; and certainly no less ourselves because we are putting on Christ, and becoming new creatures. When the sweet Power works with the co-operating harmony of our own will, it "works in us mightily."

Where it finds carnality and unbelief it can do no mighty works. If it be entirely resisted, it complains: "I would, but ye would not." "O that thou hadst known," &c., &c. No one can be transformed and glorified but through the consenting action of his own will and affections.

Are we in unity with this Holy Power? Is it penetrating us? Does it stir our lowest depths? Is it a *power* in us, and the prevailing power? Or has another power the mastery over us? By a mystery of subtlety, and by the warmest friendliness with our own will, another power seeks to withdraw us from co-operating with the Power of Christ. It is perfectly horrible to hell, that we should be conformed to the Divine Image which they have lost. Whether we know it or not, they know full well, that if we yield to the Jesus-power which is working in us, we shall acquire the standing and condition from which they have fallen. We have already intimated that there are good reasons for supposing that the highest heaven is vacant, by the fall of "Satan and his angels." If the fallen ones were God's first-born, and of all His angels, the chief, their incredible "rule, authority, and power," would in some degree be accounted for. One thing is certain, the Son of God is peopling, [if not repeopling,] the highest heaven. "The Body of Christ," which is being redeemed and organized, is essential to God's glory, and to the stability and completeness of the angelic heavens.

Those, and those only can give the Eternal Father His true glory, who know and love His redemption in Christ Jesus! "Unto Him be glory in the Church, in *Christ Jesus*." The Church is the seed-field of the Glory of God. Christ has sown Himself in this field. By "the Church" we do not mean any organization that is so called among men; but every human soul, who consents to the dominion and control of the Son of God. All men who receive Him, and reflect Him, in that measure, glorify God. Not in ourselves, but in Christ Jesus, we become one with God, and like God. Oil and water cannot be made one, without a medium: how much less God and fallen souls! "Christ, the Power of God," is the sole

God's Glory,
sure in Christ.

Power that can make us divine sons. And all the glory, in which we shall ever shine, will be just so much of His Glory as we appropriate. Though His, it will be our very own, for He hath a delight in being the Life and spring of our souls. The Life which He gives to us is more intensely His, for we only own ourselves in Him. In and of ourselves, we have no more means of glorifying God, than has the earth of making a summer without the sun. Neither angels nor men can give God any glory which He has not first given them. "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." Infinitely "The Father loveth His Son." And with the same love He loves the generation of His Son. "Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." What must be the Father's joy, to see the glory of His Son rising upon innumerable souls, who "were darkness,"—rising upon them in a twofold manner,—from Him as their Sun without them, and from Him as the Life within them. No beam of glory, given to us, will ever be in any way divided, or diverted, from either the Father, or His Son. It remains eternally immanent in Him and in us. Christ and the Church can no more be divided, than God and Christ. God's glory is not hazardous, as it was in His first heaven, and afterwards in Paradise; but sure and steadfast to eternity.

The Future
and its Glory
greater than
can be
revealed.

The whole Church of Christ, embracing as it does all past generations and all that are to come, is strictly one generation, and pertaining to one great age. Unto the Father "be glory in the Church, in Christ Jesus, unto all the generations of the Age of ages, Amen!" Christ's Age is the Age of ages. It brings us back to the Everlasting Age. Paul's *εις πάντων τῶν γενεῶν τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων*, stops our breath. It sets too much before us. A babe's hand might sooner grasp Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the South, than we survey "all the generations" of the Son of God, and the Age of ages. There "are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises;" but in these promises God has not departed from His rule of reserve. It is contrary to His Nature to make the most of any thing. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing." It is the honour of His kingly sons to be searching it out. While it

will be the Father's endless joy to bring forth what they looked not for. In relation to our capacities, the promises are too wonderful for us; but in relation to the Great Father's purpose of fulfilment, they are dim and poor.

No prophecy can be given to us, which would put us in possession of the knowledge of our ultimate condition. Whatever prophet, or angel, might communicate, would be received into the present limits of our understanding, and be conceived of from our present mode of being. Only as the personal heaven of our new nature grows, and the glory of Christ unfolds within us, can the circle of our knowledge and experience expand.

If you have not yet found "the old paths," and the "good way" of your Father's Glory, you should ask and seek, for until you are entered on "the everlasting Way," you will find no rest to your souls. If you find the Son of God, and receive Him for your life, henceforth you will be children, and heirs, of the Father's First and Last Age of Glory. Till then, you are and must be the sport of the divided powers, both of temporal nature, and of the fallen angels. Christ is the unity of all forces. The unity must be enfolded in your soul, that the sweet Power thereof may spring in you, as it springs in God, for ever and ever. The Son is the Eternal Youth of the Father Himself, and He has no other Eternal Youth to give His children. If you knew the gift of God, and Who Christ is, you would ask Him, and He would cause His Eternal unity to spring in you, and thus bring you within the circle and play of His own endlessness. Jer. vi. 16.

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

VI.

SUNDRY DUTIES, QUALIFICATIONS, AND PRIVILEGES OF BELIEVERS.

CHAP. IV. to VI. 20.

CHAP. IV. 1, 2.—1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.*

Freedom in
bonds.

This prisoner has more freedom than any emperor ever had. External freedom, with internal bonds, is but an affectation, and a mockery of freedom. A man flattered and deceived by an ostentation of bodily freedom, while his spirit is held in the heavy chains of his own lusts and fears, is as melancholy a spectacle as any under the sun. The evil spirit laughs to see his slave enjoying the fond delirious conceit that he is a free man. The slavery is then perfect. Paul's prison lies open to all heaven. In spirit, he walks at large, in boundless light. The prisoner writing to those who are worthy to know the secret, says: "I am surrounded by innumerable angels," I walk in paradise with "the spirits of just men made perfect," I am entertained with "unspeakable things." It is above eighteen years ago that he was caught up into paradise, and saw and heard unspeakable things. This whole epistle glows and shines with his supernatural experience. Chrysostom says: "Were any to offer me my choice, heaven, or Paul's chain, I would prefer the chain. Were any to ask, whether he should place me on high with the angels, or with Paul in his bonds, I would choose the prison." According to his own showing, he was less in peril in prison, than in the third heavens. As a safeguard against his ecstasy, he must needs have some messenger of Satan, to

buffet him. His experience in Paradise, exposed him to temptation, insomuch that the Lord in mercy restrained him by a special affliction, lest he should be carried away by the self-exalting spirit. In prison he found no such temptation. His bonds were a precious means of grace to him. Finding an unspeakable peace in "lowliness of mind," he commends the same to his brethren in Christ.

He has spoken of the exceeding height of our calling : he is anxious that we should have a befitting might and meekness of spirit. God having called us to share the very highest things with Himself, it becomes us to walk before Him in the sweet majesty of His Son's lowliness. God has reserved nothing to Himself, that He could give to us. He has called us into the participation of His own Glory. In view of "the prize of his high calling," Paul lost sight of every thing that was behind him and around him. Nothing was great to him, but his eternal estate, in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. To win Christ, and to be found in Him, absorbed all the powers of his soul. This "high calling" is as much ours, as Paul's. Christ is every man's "crown of life." To win Him is to win Heaven, and every thing that is good, and pure, and true, for ever. To "be found in Him" is to be found rooted and grounded in the only possible eternal life. But we are warned that the gate is strait, and the way narrow, which leads to "the prize." "Before honour is humility." "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called." Walk suitably, namely, in the Spirit of Jesus. The love which passeth knowledge is as deep as it is high. The High and Lofty One is meek and lowly in heart. We shall not be strong enough to wear His Glory, unless His own meekness constitute our power. Not by loftiness, nor by any straining of our powers, can we sustain "the hope of our calling." Childlike simplicity has the promise of the kingdom. Jesus of Nazareth has shewn us the spirit, and bearing, of all the sons of God. "Thy king cometh to thee, meek." In no other spirit than His own, can we continue in Him, or in the Father. "If a man abide not in Me he is cast forth as a

The might of
meekness.

branch and is withered." Your vine-branch has not the strength of the oak ; but you know where to look for grapes. The power to make the heart of oak is not a higher power but a lower, coarser power, than that which produces "the fruit of the vine." The meekness of Christ is the power of God.

The spirit of
our calling.

We, therefore, no sooner cease to be "meek and lowly," than we part with the spirit of our "heavenly calling." We often do this. So long as our fellow-members flatter us, or agree with us, they are interesting to us ; but if they put our meekness, or our patience to the test, we soon divide from them, and walk off in the large spirit of our self-sufficiency. Jesus had another spirit. His lowliness was without measure. There was no end to what He could bear from man. "Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself." He did not dislike them, because they disliked Him ; but He wept when He thought of what their dislike would bring upon themselves.

The charity and mutual forbearance both of Churches and church-members one towards another, are a far clearer evidence, than any opinions that they hold, of Christ's undivided love. The Church of Rome has borne a very loud witness against herself. She has often and vehemently testified that the Spirit of Christ is not her spirit.

Any Church which assumes a lordship over other Churches is sowing for herself in judgment, and will reap accordingly. Let every bishop, pastor, and teacher in the service of Christ Jesus, inquire what spirit they are of. It behoves them, above all men, to be "meek and lowly in heart."

Our Lord took very special pains to convince His disciples that nothing like the spirit and manners of earthly rulers and governments would obtain in the kingdom of heaven. "It shall not be so among you." "By the way they had disputed who should be greatest. And He sat down and called the twelve and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all." "Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them and said . . .

The way to
heaven.

Mark ix. 34,
35.

Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." And the hour being come "that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, He riseth from supper and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash His disciples' feet. . . . After He had washed their feet and was set down again, He said . . . I have given you an example," &c., &c. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." After Him, the teaching of every apostle, who writes in the New Testament, is that no one can rise, or be exalted, in the kingdom of Christ, but by humility. "Put on, as the elect of God, humbleness of mind." "Be ye clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." "Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and He shall lift you up." There is nothing more God-like than Humility, and nothing which God loves so well, or honours so much. Satan lost his part in the kingdom and the glory of God, by walking in loftiness. He said in his heart, "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God." By self-exaltation he fell, and became "king over all the children of pride." He is the strength of all self-will; and the spirit of haughtiness, wherever it is, is from him. On the other hand, the Son of God, who is equal with the Father, and the Inheritor of all His glory, has it in His heart to make Himself least of all, and servant of all. Let every one who names the the Name of Christ observe His path, and walk therein. A different path will not lead to His Kingdom.

From everlasting He had been "the Image of the Invisible God." But meekness was the Spirit of His Glory. He coveted not His distinction. "The Form of God" stirred in Him no spirit of self-glorying. All the powers and virtues which the Father had in Himself hiddenly, the Son, as "the Brightness of His Glory," had manifestly. As the sun has a hidden ground which is the source and fountain of all his glory; such is the distinction between the Invisible Depth, and

Matt. xviii.
1-4.

Matt. xx. 27,
28.

John xiii. 1-17.

Col. iii. 12.

1 Pet. v. 5.

James iv. 10.

Job 41 3-7

“the Form of God.” As every light has in it all the qualities of the substance from which the light proceeds, in like manner the Son of God is the Light in which all things that the Father hath “appear and shine. But the Father being an eternal meekness and humility, there is in all the glory of the Only Begotten Son, the very Soul of humility. Whoever would make an approach towards a conception of the meekness of His Divine Glory, must admit nothing like fierceness, excess, or impetuosity into his thought. Eagerness, haste, and a love of display, betoken a want of balance. It is probable that our natural conception of the Glory of God, represents rather the ambition of Satan, than the meekness of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And misconceiving God’s Nature and Glory, we are not prepared to believe that Jesus brought Him out to view. The truth is, the desire to empty Himself, to divest Himself of His Form of Glory, and to make Himself of no reputation was the Father’s motion in His heart. He will lower Himself, and still lower Himself to the uttermost. Instead of “the Form of God,” He will take “the form of a servant.” Being in fashion as a mortal man, from the humble spirit of love which is in Him from the Father, He holds Himself bound to die for His creatures, and to undergo death in the most humiliating form. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those in earth, and those under earth ; (or as the Rheims version renders it, “of celestials, and of terrestrials, and of infernals ;”) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD to the glory of God the Father.” Observe, “to the glory of God the Father,” for the voluntary humiliation of the Son, was emphatically the meekness and glory of the Father.

Phil. ii. 3-11.

Because the Humility of Jesus is so utterly true to the Father, and so completely represents Him, He has given Him a name above every name, and a throne above every throne. We know the Father now, but we know Him no where save in Christ. From henceforth ye know Him, and have seen

Him. "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His. "Learn of Me; I am meek and lowly in heart." Of necessity, as heirs of the heavenly kingdom, "the vocation wherewith we are called" must be to walk before God, in all meekness and lowliness, as Jesus walked.

Nations perish under the finesse, vain-glory, and heartless grandeur of their wealth and pride. And in any other spirit, than the humility of Christ, souls will fail of reaching the glory of His presence. It is in this very connection that Paul says, "My beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," with trembling solicitude, lest you should depart from the only spirit in which God is working to effect your salvation, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." "The Lord saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." "He hath respect unto the lowly." "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit." "God giveth grace to the humble." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven."

Jno. xiv. 7-9.

Psa. li. 17.

Psa. xxxiv. 18.

Psa. cxxxviii. 6.

Isa. lvii. 15.

1 Pet. v. 5.

Matt. v. 3.

In all probability, we shall find that our conception of Heaven is gross and extravagant. The Divine Nature, as a unity, is much sweeter, meeker than we imagine; and Heaven has much more of the simplicity and repose of a real Home, than our too brilliant descriptions would lead one to suppose. Our talk about its dazzling splendour is vicious and misleading. "There remaineth a *rest* for the people of God." Not only do fire and light represent God, but the humble ground and meek water represent Him too. What is division, and therefore, excess, in nature, is, in the Divine Nature unity, and therefore mildness and peace. "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters." To pass from a world of vegetation and greenness, into mere shining ether, would be a bitter, terrible loss. It would be less human, and therefore less Divine. We shall go to a world whence all vegetation springs. Heaven is surely an eternal

From your
idea of Hea-
ven, subtract
mere blaze,
and add
sweetness.

spring. In Paradise we shall see a greener green. The flowering plants, instead of being bolder, gaudier than ours, will be softer, more delicate in hue, and lovelier in form. The rose and the lily of the valley will speak to us as they do now, only more directly and movingly, of the love and the humility of God. The angels will not rush and blaze, but meet us, and talk with us in the tender grace of a divine order of fellow-citizens. When you see with what meekness the new life from Heaven opens every spring in our planet, think of your Divine Fatherland, where, in the joy of His love, God rests with His children, and His children rest with Him, and with each other.

CHAP. IV. 3-6.—*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

The bond was
broken long
ago.

We are called to do what angels failed to do. So long as the sons of God, in their original heavenly kingdom, kept "the unity of the Spirit," the universe was comprehended in an Almighty bond of Peace. To keep the Truth, and to keep the unity of the Spirit, are the same thing. The Spirit is Truth, and the Spirit is the unity of all things. Satan, the head of a distinguished kingdom, "abode not in the Truth." He and his angels broke the unity of God's Spirit. The Peace of creation fled away; the divided powers rushed into strife; mischief, derangement, horror followed, on an immense scale. It could not be otherwise. If the unity of the Spirit was an unspeakable fulness of powers in one harmonious play of joy, the breaking of that unity could bring about nothing less than an awful dissolution of Divine order throughout the whole kingdom. The Spirit of meekness was outraged, the Lamb was slain, chaos reigned. God had to begin His creation anew, or rather to restore it from its hideous enmities and

painful disorders. That all things and creatures, which are now divided and at strife, fell out of a state of unity and peace, is certain. For all things were one, and in One, before they became many. Having fallen out of their first estate, they are to be restored again to unity. This is "the restitution of all things," which God has promised since the world began. Division and contrariety reign unto death, but the Spirit of redemption in Christ Jesus, which is "the unity of the Spirit," is reigning through righteousness to bring all things back to harmony and eternal life.

For unknown ages before our father Adam appeared, the Logos had been patiently, and with all lowliness laying the beams of His chambers in the deep, and preparing to raise from the chaotic floods the first forms of His ameliorative series of developments. The final Rest which is the end of His works will not be delayed, neither will it be unduly hastened. He will observe His own order. His Patience is not exhausted. His humility and reserve have been abused, but His Love refuses to be discouraged. Whatever His creation has lost, He has retained. The whole unity is in Him; and descending from Him into our souls, it is a Peace which passeth all understanding, inasmuch as it includes the Reconciliation of all things. Descending into the elements, it is the efficient cause of a universal renewal.

The patience
of the
Restorer.

Were all churches and church-members concerned to "keep the unity of His Spirit," a bond of Peace, strong as the everlasting firmament, would encircle them.

But how is it possible that we should worthily conceive of the riches comprehended in "the Unity of the Spirit?" We have seen a company of a thousand musicians and singers playing and singing one tune in harmony. The persons were distinct, the instruments distinct, and the voices very distinct, and yet all were a composed unity. An army of a hundred thousand men, in movement and operation, may be a perfect unity. But in order to form an idea of the "unity of the Spirit," we must imagine that the whole universe, visible and invisible, with all its distinctions, elements, powers and virtues

The fulness of
the Unity.

were dissolved in one sea of being. For all have sprung from such a sea, and, in the Spirit, are such a Sea of living, blissful Unity. Even in the sphere of striving, corrupt nature, we see enough to make us wonder at the variety which the Spirit carries in the bosom of His unity. For all the variety, in earth and heaven, is wrought "by One and the self-same Spirit." The new growths, the joy and the glory, which constitute our summer, are so much of the fulness of the Spirit opened to our view. The creatures in different elements and latitudes are so distinct that they have no communion with each other; but they are all one in the Spirit which animates them. The sea and its contents, the innumerable tribes of the air, and all the species found on our hills and in our plains and valleys, are but very partial manifestations of the wealth and variety of The Spirit. The all things of The Father, and all things of Creation, and the all things in Christ's finished work are included in the Spirit's Unity. Pause and contemplate "the river of God's pleasures," "the fulness of joy" which the perfect know above. Whatever our understandings may hold as truth, is but a mere division of this unity. "The unity of the Spirit" is "the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus," and can only be apprehended by the affections.

The joy of this
Unity.

The joy of unity must needs be as rich and full as the unity. "The unsearchable riches of Christ" are its riches. He is our Unity of good. Therefore, "He is our Peace." Were we, as the true children of Jesus Christ, to walk in love as He charged us, and as He loved us, the Spirit, like a glowing sea of heavenly mildness, would broaden and broaden over the believing world, hushing all our contentions, and dissolving our divisions into His own sweet and perfect Life. In no other spirit than that of Christ's universal love, shall we be either able to keep "the Unity of the Spirit," or to know "the Peace of God." The testimony of all the apostles is one,—namely, that the Spirit of universal love is the Crown of all the graces, and "the bond of perfectness." "Put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another,

and forgiving one another, . . . and *above all these things put on Love*, which is the bond of perfectness." "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, *Love*:"—the all-comprehending universal grace. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." When we "love not in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth, *hereby we know that we are of The Truth, and shall assure our hearts before God.*" This also is the doctrine which we have just been taught by Paul's prayer, "that ye may be rooted and grounded in love, *that ye may know the Love of Christ* which passeth knowledge, *that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*" "All the fulness of God" is the same thing as "the Unity of the Spirit." "The Peace of God passeth all understanding," for it is the Peace of His infinite Fulness. The harmonies of this Divine fulness constitute Heaven. And in so far as we keep "the unity of the Spirit," we shall taste the heavenly joy. All tempests and strifes, whether in nature, or in the church, are but signs and complaints that unity is lost. A feverish action set up in the body, admonishes us that its unity is broken. The body keeping its unity in the bond of peace, is health. Pain is but a sign of the energy with which the body is labouring to expel the enemy, and bring back the reign of peace. The wrath of God is but the fervour of His Love seeking to overcome evil with good.

Col. iii. 14.

2 Pet. i. 5-10.

1 John iv. 16.

1 John iii. 18, 19.

As yet the divided communions of the Church are far enough from "the unity of the Spirit." Like fish and fowl, we know little of each other, and as little of the peace of God. We are the children of bondsmen, and bondsmen we remain. We have never gone beyond the leading-strings of our particular mother-church, never been weaned, and therefore know nothing of the liberty into which we are called in Christ Jesus. We walk between the narrow hedge-rows of our own orthodoxy, fettered by the phraseology of our party. When shall the trumpet of unity sound, and the walls of our religious prisons fall about us?

Division how long?

Why do the larger birds prey upon smaller ones? the fish likewise? Is that beautiful? Why does the lion tear the lamb? Why does he not win a victory over himself and be a right noble lion? Why do Christians assault, bite, and tear each other? Because, like the beasts, they are under their own nature, and not under Christ. "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

Phil. ii. 21.

A sign.

Cor. xii. 13.

The want of unity in the Church is a sign to us of the absence of the Spirit. If the various Christian communions were true to their vocation, walking "with all meekness and lowliness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love," the distinctions between them might be even greater and more numerous than they are, and yet they might display and enjoy a very real unity. It is not our part to make the unity, but to keep that which is made. The children of God are one in Jesus Christ. "By *One Spirit* we are all baptized *into one body*; and have been all made to drink into *One Spirit*." But we are slow of heart to yield to "the unity of the Spirit." Different communions sometimes meet together in a show of unity, and perhaps, for a happy hour, are carried above and beyond themselves, into the broad lands of the one Spirit which is common to them all; but the first serious test finds them all going *their own ways*, and settling down again into the hardness and narrowness of their divisions. They call Jesus, Lord, and straightway maintain the lordship of their own thoughts, methods, peculiarities. Simple as simplicity, and beautiful as beauty, and one as God is one, is the Divine plan of human salvation, and unity, by Christ Jesus; but what a maze of thought, and house of confusion, Christendom has become, through the self-will, the zeal, and the pride of partisans.

The Divine
endeavour.

Paul fitly says: "*Endavouring* to keep the unity of the Spirit." The unity is greater than we can understand or believe. Our little minds, little hearts, and little consciences, often think and feel that they ought to fight against the spirit. We are not prepared to follow Heavenly and Divine leadings. The idols which our understandings have conceived, and set

up, are tyrants, and we are their willing slaves. But the Spirit will not give up His endeavour, until the whole Church represents His own unity. The moles and bats of Christendom may hold on, and on, to their idolatries: but as many as are led by the Spirit will grow weary of them and abandon them. The people that are made ready for the Lord, must be brought "into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." The concern for unity which at any time shows itself in the Church, should be regarded with tender reverence. It is the way of the Spirit. Whithersoever the Spirit is to go, thither should go all the living creatures and all the wheels, and all the powers of the Church. The dead will remain with their dead.

The Peace of God can only be found in one body. "Let the Peace of God rule in your hearts to which you are called *in one body*." The Body of the Son of God is One. All the powers of God, in one Spirit of rest, dwell in this body. Enduring Peace in any creature that is under the dominion of this visible creation is an impossibility. If the Peace of God could be found and realized, that would be proof enough that the Unity of The Spirit was not broken in nature. On the other hand, as there is no abiding peace in any kingdom, or element of nature, we know that throughout the whole range of material things the Divine unity has been violated. Under the restless striving of nature's divided powers, peace is a dream which soon dreams itself out. The Son of God is organizing a Kingdom of Unity, which, in the end, will supplant the present vain, corruptible and cruel constitution of things. It is very unsatisfactory to God, it is a sad scene to the holy angels; it distresses man and beast. "The whole Creation groaneth." The spirits of eternity, tried and confounded by long waiting, sigh, "*How long, O Lord!*"

The body of
of Peace.

Col. iii. 15.

The unredeemed should look their real prospects frankly in the face. So long as you consent to the dominion of nature's conflicting elements and powers, you belong to the great kingdom of dissolving forms. Delude not your souls with the vain hope of "Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace."

Come into the House of Unity. Seek incorporation with the new kingdom of The Son of God, and find in the eternal harmony of God's working powers, your own Eternity of Peace.

Our Apostle cannot drop this subject of unity. He opens out the seven-fold oneness involved in our Heavenly calling:—

The fulness of
The Unity.

One Body,
One Spirit,
One Hope of our calling,
One Lord,
One Faith,
One Baptism,

One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in all.

These Seven meet together in the Church of Jesus Christ, and constitute a complex, but perfect whole. The scope of each of these is immense, for the greatness of the whole unity attaches to each particular. The sevenfoldness meets in every one of the seven.

“One Body,”

The series begins with “one body,” and ends with “one God and Father of all;” for these are the two extremes, the Beginning and the Ending. The body incorporates both the Beginning and all the intermediate powers and conditions. It is the will of God that every distinction in Himself should be embodied. The body, therefore, which is His final purpose, is declared to be, as we have already seen, “*the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*”

not material.

In contemplating this body you must divest yourselves of a material idea. What we call matter is by no means essential to living organisms. On the contrary, it is essential to the reality, unity, and permanence of a body that it be *not* material. “There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial.” But the celestial is much more strictly a body than the terrestrial. For a celestial body is incapable of decay, but an earthly body soon collapses, and falls into an inorganic mass. A body may be material, or psychical, or spiritual. The material is the lowest and least worthy of being called a body.

Strictly speaking, matter is an apparition. It is essentially deficient of the higher qualities of being, and consequently cannot maintain its integrity. It is a dense vapour that "appeareth for a little time, and then vanishes away." As our own material body is a veil hiding another body, in like manner, the material universe is a covering upon a more glorious universe. The Sanctuary which was so constructed as to be a figure of Creation, had for its outmost covering rough animal skins; but by lifting a series of coverings, you came to gold, and within all, was The Divine Presence. Elisha's servant seeing one morning the Syrian army close at hand, went in with terror to his master; but as soon as deeper eyes were opened in him, he saw that a mightier and more glorious host were between them and the enemy. Peter, James, and John were permitted to see that our Lord had, within His material body, a divinely luminous one, which was His true body.

We are called to become citizens of the kingdom which is the inner and true body of the universe. This is the kingdom of Heaven, which our Lord preached and opened to men. Our souls, live, move, and have their being in this inner sphere. We are a part of it. It is a mother's bosom to us, in which, by and by, we shall fall asleep, die, and wake again. It is our Father's house, and the image of His fulness. The redeemed body of the human race will have a distinction of glory and office in the universal body; but the whole incorruptible and glorious universe is "one body." By one Spirit we are all baptized into "one body;" and all the baptized "have been made to drink into one Spirit." These words declare in the simplest possible terms, both in what salvation consists, and how it is effected. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Man is saved by being made anew a member of the "one body," of God's true children. And he is made a member by being baptized into it, and by drinking into his spirit the "One Spirit" thereof. Whoever shall say that any thing else is necessary to salvation, speaks after man, and not after God. To raise up in the soul the life of the Son of God is the "one thing needful."

We have already dwelt, at some length, on "the unity of "One Spirit. the Spirit."

"One Hope of
our calling."

Our human hope in all generations, and all over the world, is that we may come home at last; that after the illusions and delusions of our material existence have vanished, we may find our inner being drawn into that heavenly circle of things, which God fills and glorifies, and will fill and glorify for ever. Not only all men in all ages, but Heaven and earth share in "one hope." Abraham and Paul, Adam and his last penitent child, are looking forward to one "blessed hope." Neither the first believers who "died in faith," thirty centuries and upwards before the Incarnation, nor any of the angels, can realize the fulness of their hope, one day sooner than the generations which are yet to come. The first born wait for the last born. God is One, His happy universe is one Father's house, and one hope animates all. By the brightness and joy of our hope, let us glorify our Father, Who has called us to His kingdom and glory. Christ is our hope. For His sake we must rejoice in hope. None of the clouds, changes, pains, trials of our material nature should chill our confidence. Our hope is steadfast. Let us with patience wait for it.

"One Lord."

"One Lord." Everything in eternity and everything in time, everything in God and everything in creatures, realize their highest possibility, their first theatre of life, and their sweetest unity in the one Lord of all creatures. All the powers of the Godhead, in their due measure and order, are an ever-springing paradise and garden of delights in Him. All truth, all law, all righteousness and authority, have their springs in Him. There are beams of power between Him and all things. He is Lord of all, comprehending in Himself the whole circuit of being, from its outgoing,—through all the mazes of disobedience and sorrow, through all the depths of darkness and death,—unto its return to God and eternity, in the image of His own harmonies.—"One Lord," the Creator, the Redeemer of our souls, the Spirit of our life, the Pattern of our character, the Reconciler of all things, the Destroyer of death, the joy and delight of Heaven and earth. "The same to-day, yesterday, and for ever."

"One Faith."

"One faith." If faith were a system of thought, one faith

would be an impossibility. For all men could not be sincere in subscribing to one scheme of thought. Faith is the warm and steadfast eye of our life in Christ. It is the glance of God in the soul. "The spirit of a man is the candle of Jehovah." And man consenting to use this in-shining light, in the contemplation of God and eternal things, is exercising faith. Faith, therefore, is at once God's operation in man, and man's own free act. The manifestation of God's Spirit is given to every man, whether he use it or not. "But all men have not faith." All men do not allow themselves to be stirred up to spiritual exercises. They resist the Spirit of God. The principle of faith, the light of faith, is absolutely one in all the earth. God is One, and the Spirit of His Son is the Light that lighteth every spirit. In this light, we "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." The soul in unity with the Spirit of Christ is persuaded of the reality and glory of eternal things. To be one with Christ, is to be one with God and Heaven. The heart of the believer, therefore, glows with an undying love, and rejoices in hope. This is the "one Faith," which underlies all the opinions and diversities, all the failings and sins of the church.

And just as strictly, the whole church has but "*one Baptism.*" But as the "one Faith" is very distinct from the many conceptions and opinions of believers; in like manner, the one Baptism of the Church, is very distinct from the baptism of the flesh, either in water, or with water. The words of our risen Lord should teach us in what sense to understand the "one Baptism." "John indeed baptized with water, but *you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*" The "one Baptism" is the baptism of the soul into Christ. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized *into Jesus Christ*, were baptized *into His death?*" "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." We have here the "one baptism, and the "one body," and the "one Spirit," of all Christians. "The

"One Baptism."

Acts. i. 5.

Rom. vi. 3.

1 Cor. xii. 13.

Friends" never baptize in, or with, water, but they are second to none of their fellow Christians, in the importance which they attach to the "one Baptism." Baptism in water is a sacred and beautiful thing, when it expresses and embodies the "one Baptism" in the Spirit: otherwise it is nothing.

1 Cor. xi. 16.

"If any man seem to be contentious, (on this subject, or any other,) we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God." In all that concerns their *life in Christ*, the Churches are, and always were, and ever will be, at one. Division and strife arise from the desire to supplement the spirit of life in Christ, with the definitions, limitations, conceits and formalities, of the human understanding. Whatever opinions any man may hold, or whatever ceremonialism he may practise, or defend, let him be careful that his zeal be not the fervour of his own spirit. Let every thing that is private, denominational, or ritualistic, be very humble; and let love be the only earnest spirit of the Church, love to Christ, love to each other, and love to all men. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." "Whoever walks in love, will be led by the beams of God's truth, and be carried through all tortuosities and windings, to the final harmony of things."

Jno xiii. 35.

"One God
and Father of
all."

"One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." The series ends, as it should, in the bosom of the adorable Trinity; for the whole Trinity is here. The Father is the source of all things; the Son, or the Wisdom of the Father, is the Administrator, through Whom are all things; and the Spirit, which is in all things, is the Bond holding all together. Blessed thought! Fatherliness is over all things, round about all things; and not only outside all things, but "through all" things, as one chain of innumerable links; and "in all," as the spring of all motion, life and growth. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever, Amen." All things having come from One Father, all things must have somewhat of their First cause in them, through which they are in the First Father, and the First Father in them. The centre of Attraction to the whole

Rom. xi. 36.

universe is the Father, from Whom it proceeded. Under the influence of One primary Centre, stars move, tides flow, flowers bloom, angels love, and men believe in their Saviour. The way of all self-willed and rebellious spirits is hard, and, moreover, they dwell in a dry land. To them, the power and glory of the Father are repellant, and they shrink away to be confounded by their own darkness, and broken on the wheel of Divine Order. For whether spirits be accordant or discordant, God works on, according to the counsel of His own will; of necessity treading under every opposing spirit, and bringing every consenting spirit, out of sin and darkness, into a condition of permanent blessedness and glory. Let the sinfulest of us and the farthest off arise, and return to our Father. Let our Father have joy in us, let Jesus have joy in us, let the Spirit have joy in us, let the angels have joy in us, let those who have longed after us with many a sigh and prayer, have joy in us; and let us have joy in ourselves, by union and communion with the whole body in Heaven and earth of the Father's children.

CHAP. IV. 7-10.—*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Therefore He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. 9 (Now that He ascended, what is it, but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is He also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.)*

With Christ for our life, we are members of the last and ripest kingdom of God, a kingdom of completed harmonies; but as individuals we are very small items of the whole. We must be very careful, therefore, not to afflict our brethren, by too warmly pleading for our understanding of things, which at best, only represents our own "measure of the gift of Christ." "The fulness of God," or "the unity of the Spirit," leaves our

Each one has his own measure of the heavenly gift.

utmost conceptions infinitely behind. All creatures have their measure; but "the fulness of Christ" is without measure. Between the greatest and least disciple, the difference is very small, but between the greatest and Christ, the difference is as that between a babe's span and the circle of the heavens. Humble, undistinguished members are as essential to the body of Christ, and as dear to Him, as the most distinguished. The great are not great for their own, but for their brethren's sake. Therefore let not the distinguished despise the undistinguished, nor the undistinguished envy the distinguished. "We are members one of another;" and "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him."

From Jesus, the reigning Head of our kingdom, every member receives a gift which makes the receiver one with Himself. It is a gift of His own life, which is not only a sign of His victory over death, but insures the like victory to the receiver. Christ's ascension signified that the conquest of all the powers of flesh, world, death, and hell was complete. Being found in fashion as a man, all spirits who are in league with the flesh, exhausted their whole art and power upon Him. Beyond oppressing Him and awakening His resistance, they could do nothing. Instead of taking Him captive, He made them His captives. He was in the world, but the spirit of the world was powerless to move His inclinations in a worldly direction. The world-spirit had taken all men captive: Christ turned the captivity. "I have overcome the world." "Be of good cheer." The spirit of this world is powerless before man at last. Henceforth the house of bondage cannot hold a single human spirit, who desires to go forth. As the Head of all men, the sin of all men met in Him, the wrath and curse of all sin came upon Him. He died as one accursed, and became Death's captive, but the captive was too mighty for Death. "He led captivity captive." Death fled before Him. Heaven's light shone clearly into the valley. In Christ's gift of life, man, any man, may go down into the valley, mocking death and chanting victory. Through death, Christ descended into the lower Earth, (called also "the heart of the Earth,")

Christ's uni-
versal
conquests,

over all the
powers of the
flesh and the
world,

over sin and
death,

over Hades,

traversing in spirit the great shadowy land, and preaching the great year of release. Hades was helpless, and could not hold its prey. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, Samuel and Daniel, and all who had died in faith rejoiced to see their King among them. Hades must yield up her captivity. Hope, long deferred, came at last. "He led captivity captive," saying to hosts of prisoners, "Go forth," and to those who were in darkness, "Show yourselves." By the mouth of His prophets the Lord had declared, "the captives shall be taken from the mighty, and the prey shall be delivered from the terrible." The captives were like them that dream. "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing." "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will rejoice and be glad in His salvation." Hades was faint with terror that day, and Heaven sung a new song. The vengeance and the comfort of God passed through Hades. Jesus passed through, not in the weakness of His flesh, but in the might of His Spirit. He loosed His prisoners, and opened the gates, and led a great captivity captive. "I have the keys of Hades," rings from His lips. And again, "O Hades where is thy victory?" By translating Hades, *grave*, the whole force of this passage is lost. It is Hades, which has lost its victory over the souls of men. Christ has acquired it. Believers in Christ, go through Hades and pass on their way to an open Heaven. Henceforth Death and Hades deliver up their dead, such as are for Heaven to Heaven, and such as are for hell to hell.

Isa. xlix. 9.

Isa. xlix. 25.

Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2.

Isa. xxv. 9.

1 Cor. xv. 35.

—and over
Heaven.

Having taken every element and power captive, which had ever held man captive, Jesus ascended to the Heavenlies, and passing through from Heaven to Heaven, He clothed His Humanity with the virtues and powers of each Heaven, so that not only in His Divine, but in His Human nature, He excels all the angelic orders, having by conquest obtained a more excellent Name than they. His Name expresses what no other name in earth or heaven expresses, namely, acquired powers which never before were acquired or possessed.

His new
powers are
gifts for men.

All His powers ;—those which He acquired in the days of His flesh, over the flesh ; and those which He acquired in the world, by overcoming the world ; and those which He acquired by enduring the wrath and curse of sin ; and those which He acquired in death, over death ; and those which He acquired in Hades, over all its gates and powers ; and those which He acquired in the Heavens of the angels, by transcending them all ;—all these are now and for ever the powers of His Divine Humanity. As the Son of Man, He has acquired these powers for men. They are His gifts to men, “dividing to every man severally as He will.” But before he speaks of the distribution of these powers, Paul detains us for a moment by one of his parentheses.

(“Now that He ascended, what is it, but that also He descended first, into the lower parts of the earth ? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.”) He cannot speak of our Lord’s ascent without alluding to His descent, nor can he speak of these extremes without thinking of all that is intermediate between them. Jesus comprehends in Himself both these extremes, and all that is between them.

The new
kingdom.

There being no Heaven which sufficiently corresponded with His conquests and acquirements to be a suitable sphere for His redeemed, He ascended “far above all heavens,” “to prepare a place for them.” There were innocent and holy heavens, and there were Thrones, Dominions, and Powers, with all their multitudes ; but there was no heaven founded on universal conquest ; no heaven that had overcome flesh, world, sin, death, Hades, and the whole power of the enemy. It is of course conceivable that our Lord should have distributed His redeemed among all the existing Heavens ; but this would have been foreign to God’s method of order. The fulness and unity of Christ’s nature are utterly distinct from every previously existing form of being. He unites in Himself His Father’s glory, the glory of the holy angels, and His own peculiar glory, as the Reconciler of all things. In all justice and propriety, therefore, He has founded a new Dominion in His Father’s

House. This new Heaven was from eternity foreseen, and fore-ordained, as at once the keystone, and the crown, of all the works of God. No Heaven could repose on an absolutely "sure foundation," so long as there were in the universe unconquered powers, or irreconciled divisions. Nor even now could Christ's form of Being be considered final, if He did not include in Himself every principle, and the settled harmony of all contrarieties. But His descent into the earth, and thence into death and Hades, and His ascension thence to a sphere above all the inhabited heavens, demonstrated to all angels, as He passed through the midst of them to His own throne, that no power remained anywhere unsubdued. Christ is not only the legitimate and natural Head of Creation; He is also the Firstborn from the dead, and strictly representative of universal recovery. From natures, qualities, and powers in Himself, answering to all things, "He fills all things." From the uppermost heights to the nethermost depths, throughout the whole circuit, He has sown His power, and left the track of His glory. It was essential to the Father's original plan, and the integrity and harmony of the universe, that the whole circle should be complete in Him, "that in Him *all fulness* should dwell."

The supreme Headship of Christ fulfils *supreme service*. Having taken up all things into Himself, and reconciled all things in Himself, He is the new seed-corn of the universe. Under Him all things become new. "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold *I make all things new*." There are no angels which are not receiving a spirit of life from Him, that they, as well as men, may become absolutely harmonic creatures. Their minds are being greatly enlarged, and their affections quickened anew, and, as a consequence, they will put on higher and higher degrees of glorification. Neither angels nor men will rest until they are filled, after their own order, with the fulness of the Son of God. And not only all creatures, but "all things" are waiting to be made new by His unity. The very end of His Incarnation, death, descent to Hades, and ascent above all heavens, is, "*that He might fill*

Universal
Headship is
universal
service.

ALL THINGS." Waves of living energy, from the Sun of His glory, are ever and ever flowing into the Heavens, and thence into all the elements and kingdoms of nature. The whole universe visible and invisible is His Seed-field, and His own Unity is the seed. More and more rapidly, and more and more widely, from age to age, the sowing goes on ; for reception increases the power of reception, and the greater the diffusion, the greater also is the momentum, of His regenerative Spirit.

Our whole being should dilate with a glowing desire to receive Christ. He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." His dominion is universal and everlasting. Let Him descend into our dark spirit-world, and take captive all our powers and passions ; and let Him ascend above all the heavens of our thoughts and conceptions, and thence reign over us, filling us with the Truth of His Love, and the Love of His Truth, with the variety of His unity, and the unity of His variety, with the glory of His Power, and the Power of His Glory. Amen.

CHAP. IV. 11-13.—*And He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; 12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ ; 13 Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

The relations of Christ's spirit to men are past finding out. Christ entered into all conditions, and filled all things, that it might be in His power to give to men a spirit, in which all things are reconciled and at rest. In this sense the Holy Spirit was not, till the whole work of Christ was finished. The Holy Spirit according to New Testament usage is the new spirit of humanity, which is shed upon us abundantly from our ascended Saviour. Nothing is so secret, nothing so potent,

nothing so appeases and pleases the whole depth of the soul. In this great gift of Christ, all gifts are included. The loftiest and deepest spirit ever given to creatures, is now being given to men. Never before was the whole fulness of Divine nature, and of created nature, given as "One Spirit." By the gift of this "one and the self-same Spirit," some are distinguished by their love, others receive rather a gift of wisdom, others a gift of knowledge, while others receive a spirit of meekness and reserve. Every receiver is quickened according to his own nature and genius.

The all-inclusive gift.

Many saw our Lord, believed in Him, and received the Holy Spirit, who were neither apostles, nor teachers. Pre-eminently, Jesus Himself is "The Apostle of our profession," sent directly from the Father, into the world. After Him, those are apostles who directly by Himself are called and qualified to represent Him. They are the princes of the kingdom of heaven, having close and immediate relationship with the Lord. There may be little that is striking about them. They are rather simple honest men, than men of great parts. They are channels of grace to all nations, "Go ye, and initiate all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." *Prophets* are men who speak from a Divine impulse, rather than from their own thought, or wisdom. A man may occasionally be the medium of a Divine utterance, and yet be neither a representative man, nor a teacher. Prophets are irregular men. At times they are in a very lofty mood, they see visions, they hear the voice of God; but they are ill adapted for the routine of ordinary service. You cannot depend upon them. They will not come under the yoke of established methods. *Evangelists* are matter of fact men. They are rather inspired by the past than the present. The facts of the Gospel are their all and in all; of the laws of the facts they know nothing. They are believers, but blind. They are admirably fitted to rouse the attention of plain unsophisticated persons. For the African mind they are all that you could desire: to the philosophical Hindu they are useless.

Apostles.

Matt. xxviii.
19.
Prophets.

Evangelists.

Pastors and
teachers.

In the work of awakening simple men from their sleep in sin, they are perfectly at home; but as pastors and teachers they are wholly unfitted. *Pastors and teachers* are rather architects and builders, than quarrymen, or gatherers of raw material. It is as distinctly our Lord's will that Christians should grow in grace and knowledge, as that sinners should be converted. Some, therefore, are adapted to arouse and convert men, and others to educate the converted. Men may be brought to Christ, and yet be very imperfect men. They are in Christ, but not grown up into Christ. In most of them, their own sinful nature is much more active and prominent, than their new nature. Adam is very strong in them, and Christ very weak. The new man in them is but a mere germ, without development. They require much teaching and much grace to make them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of saints in light." The invisible power of Christ, and His visible gifts in the Church, are in co-operation "*for the perfecting of the saints.*" An endless variety of ministry is provided for this end. Every divine ministry is supplied with its measure of wisdom and of grace, from the treasury of Christ.

The perfecting
of believers.

Diversities of gifts are necessary to meet a corresponding diversity in the natures of men. Each disciple is susceptible of a development peculiar to himself; nor can his perfection be confounded with that of any other man. The perfection of a primrose is not that of a lily, nor the perfection of a lily that of a rose. God's idea of perfection is not to make lilies into fruit-trees, nor fruit-trees into cedars. God will have His lily-children to be perfect as lilies, and His cedar-children to be perfect as cedars, and so on. There will be endless diversity among men, yet each perfect in his own order. The riches of Divine love and wisdom, strength and beauty, will be mirrored in the variety.

"The perfecting of the saints" is not only very distinct from their conversion, or first faith in Christ; but much more important than their comforting. The Divine method of comforting is by perfecting. To comfort souls, and leave them unrenewed and disqualified for life in Heaven, would be delusive and cruel.

The Eternal Father owns no other way of comforting men, than by making them partakers of the incorruptible and eternal nature of His Son. Our Lord carefully defines the Comforter to be "the Spirit of Truth;" teaching us, that to be comforted in any other way, than by the correcting, transforming power of truth, is to be flattered and deceived. Indeed the word *παράκλητος* is not well translated by Comforter. The word rather means one who pleads in the hearts of Christ's disciples against all impurity, and wins them on in the path of perfection. To look to Christ as the Beginner of the new life is absurd, unless we also look to Him as its Finisher. Finishing the life of faith, and *perfecting men*, are the same work.

"The perfecting of the saints" can never be promoted by the ministry of a mere evangelist, or preacher of Gospel facts. The hodman is very useful, but not as an architect. A reiterator of common-places is not a teacher. Believers cannot be perfected by his everlasting a, b, c. The perfecting of your house must be given to other hands than the men who dig out the foundation. To preach salvation is one thing, to build up the body of Christ, or in other words, to perfect men for fellowship with Christ, in the glory of Heaven, is a very different thing. When persons who are already "in Christ," are ministered to by a declaimer of gospel history, they lose their time, they are not fed, not built up in their most holy faith. Evangelists are wanted, pastors and teachers are also wanted. The Lord has given both. In every age, He provides teachers adapted to the age, related to every order of mind, and every stage of spiritual progress.

The grand end of the Christian ministry, as it is also the end of time, and the end of Christ's whole work, is to perfect man, or rather to perfect humanity. "Till we all come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a Perfect Man." The Son of God is a rich unity of powers; our faith must grow, until, as life and thought, it shall correspond with "His Fulness." The Son of God is the Fountain-Head and Prototype of humanity, and humanity will in the end be the Son of God unfolded. Paul consequently, in so

"Perfect Man."

many words declares that he means by Perfect Man, "the measure of the stature of The Fulness of Christ." If our body were perfect it would perfectly represent the soul which lives in it. Humanity will be such a perfectly representative Body of Christ. But the perfection of this Body cannot be known until it is complete. Be patient, brethren, "*till we all come,*" &c., &c. Many generations of the members of this body are yet to be born. What human life will ultimately be is not conceivable to any creature in earth or heaven. How sweetly the weight of each planet is balanced against all the forces which are ceaselessly acting upon her. Instead of being oppressed thereby, she is carried by them, and glides, and blooms, and sings on her way, enjoying the rest of existence, as one who is delivered from the sense of her own weight. Much more will all things, in each member of Christ, be balanced into nicest harmony with all things in the whole body. Every member will be supported by all the members, and all the members by Christ and the Father. The joy of the "Perfect Man" will sing through each individual. Every one will be "perfect in Christ Jesus;" but the whole number will constitute "Perfect Man," the measure of the stature of the Fulness of Christ. The Perfect Man will be incorruptible, inviolable, eternal, as Christ. But who can imagine the action of the Son of God on the whole body, and the action of the whole body on each member?—the inspirations of strength? the currents of love? the irradiation of the understanding? the reciprocities? Not only the Perfect Man must first be, before any of us can know the full joy of his existence, but before we can have "the full knowledge of the Son of God." When His fulness is built up into humanity, we shall know Him as He is. Not that any one member will possess this knowledge; it will be the possession of the Body. But owing to the perfect unity and community of the Body, what is distributed among all the members, will virtually be the privilege and possession of each. In the final Body of humanity there will be no schism.

The knowledge of the Son of God reserved till we are all perfect.

Inspiring thought.

What a blessed subject of thought futurity is to every

member of the Perfect Man!—a Body, the proportions of which are those of the Son of God! and the measure of which is “the Fulness of Christ!” If this distinction were only possible to a few persons, with what admiration and envy they would be contemplated. But a share in His own Divine humanity is precisely the inheritance which He holds out to all men. He allures us to no shadow. At present we are but shadows; He is substance. Christ is Body—absolute,—an Eternal Spirit-Body, representing all the fulness of the God-head. “The last Adam is life-giving *Spirit*.” It is a Body which includes and crowns in one Form the all things of God and the all things of creation. “The crown of life,” which the Lord hath promised to those who love Him, is a body, an eternal form of being like His own. Christ dwelling in our hearts is the seed of our future Crown. “Christ in us, the hope of glory.” This is the “incorruptible Crown” of which Paul was so ambitious. “*That I may win Christ and be found in Him*, I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them dung.” Peter also speaks of “the crown of glory which shall never fade away,” manifestly meaning thereby, the Perfect Humanity of the Son of God, which we shall share, and in which “we shall reign with Him in Life.” He, the Centre, the Body, and the Channel of all living virtues and powers, and we about Him for ever.

1 Cor. ix. 25.
Phil. iii. 8, 9.

Whatever be our present weakness or imperfectness, if we stand in vital connection with Him, if we are abiding in Him, and He in us, we shall in our time and order, be made perfect as He is perfect. God has given to us a rare opportunity for the exercise both of faith and patience “till we all come unto Perfect Man.” “Behold! I and the children which God hath given me.” “None of them is lost.”

Heb. ii. 13.
John xvii. 12.

CHAP. IV. 14-19—*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the artifice of men, by craftiness to*

the method (system, μεθόδῳ) of error; 15 But holding the truth, may in love grow up into Him in all things, Which is the Head, Christ: 16 From Whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building of itself up in love. 17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk, not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart: 19 Who being past feeling, have given themselves up to a wanton life, for the working of all uncleanness with greediness.

Distinct
sources of
thought.

To grow up into the Son of God, unto a perfect man, is our defence against all those thought-waves and currents of fleshly sensibility which invade the soul, and seek to carry her from God, and from her own completeness and glory. All thought must either proceed from a plausible, fascinating "system of error," or from the Body of Truth, which is Christ. Under their ruling thoughts, men are gradually brought into strong organic connection with the source whence they come. Even those who have received a measure of the Spirit of Christ are often "tossed to and fro" between Truth itself, and some phase of the great world-system of thought. The spirit of one's life may be in Christ long before his understanding is "light in the Lord." The natural heart and mind of many are confederate with the scheme of thought of which Satan is the leading intellect. Long after Peter and his fellow apostles were true disciples, both their method of thought and the spirit of their desires, savoured more of Satan than of God. Christ could only reply to their mode of reasoning with the repulse: "Get behind Me, Satan." To the present mode of our being, error is both more plausible and pleasing than Truth. The tendency of every man's reason is to reprove Christ, and plead for the flesh. "To grow up into Christ" is an humbling, self-mortifying process. It can never be attractive to the natural

man. "I could not speak to you as unto spiritual persons, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." A system of thought about Christ and spiritual things, which leaves the carnal soul intact and uncrucified, seems to be the only one of which young Christians are capable. Spare them the severe ordeal of a new creation, and many will follow Christ and admire Him. As soon as He spake plainly to them of the law of the new life, "many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him." They preferred the grand system of error, which is according to the flesh.

1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.

How often Paul was bowed down and distressed in spirit, fearing that it would be found at last that he had bestowed on his converts, "labour in vain." They were called by the name of Christ, but was the new nature being formed in them? "My little children, I travail again in birth with you, until Christ be formed in you: for I stand in doubt of you."

Gal. iv. 19, 20.

Doctrines about Christ are no more Christ, than ideas about the sun are the sun. Your ideas of the sun, however just they may be, will not grow your corn, nor ripen your grapes. But your fields and vines, properly related to the Sun will give you full ears and rich clusters, although your ideas of the process be very defective. Hold to Christ, and have very little respect to any man's "wind of doctrine." Beware of thought-systems. Be not the slaves of your own emotions. Christ is neither thought nor feeling, "but the Bread of life." The one supreme good is to partake of Him, become grounded and established in Him. It is a very pernicious thing to be puffed up with the windy conceits of your party or church. If you sail under some current "wind of doctrine," call it evangelical or protestant, or what you will, you will find your love and joy to be very dependent on your favourite wind. But if you are in the Son of God, rather than in this or the other doctrine about Him, you will care little to ask your fellow Christians what particular wind they are sailing under. The love of God is "exceeding broad:" hold the Truth in His Love, and the Truth will not only make you free, but dispose you to accord a large freedom to others who are not of your fold. Trade-winds and church-winds are but

Doctrines
about Christ,
are not Christ.

winds. Christ is the Body of Truth. You will find little substance either in eastern or western opinion, in the doctrines of high church or low church. There are traditions which are after men, which you must not suffer to sway you this way or that. Be not "tossed to and fro." You have received Christ, walk therefore in Him. Let no man spoil you, neither through philosophy, nor church history, the former being "according to the rudiments (*στοιχεῖα*) of the world," and the latter "after the tradition of men," "and not after Christ."

The Spirit of
Love essential
to growth.

To hold the Truth in Love is the condition of growth. Be not agitated by solemn craftiness, but lovingly hold Christ for your Truth, and in love, you will grow up into Him in all things, till you come to the completeness of "perfect man." You may be puffed up by the thoughts and conceits of your venerable or self-righteous church, but you can only *grow* with any growth that eternity will recognise, as Christ, the New Man, is developed in you. The mysteries both of generation and regeneration are mysteries of love. Cleave to Christ in love, and you will grow up into Him; and only those who grow up into Him will ever know Him. Turning to those who searched the Scriptures, and who "thought that in them they had eternal life," rather than in Him, He solemnly said, "I know you, that you have not the Love of God in you."

Jno. v. 39-42.

The only love by which you can cleave to Christ, is the Life of His own Love in you. By one and the same bond the members of Christ are joined to Him and "fitly joined" to each other. They are more than "fitly joined together," they are "compacted," consolidated into the unity of one Body, under one Head. The Spirit of Christ diffused throughout the body, constitutes both its nourishment and unity. Freely and largely as the Spirit of Life flows from Christ; no greater measure can be circulating in the body than that "which every joint supplieth." Full streams cannot be transmitted through paralyzed members, or feeble joints. The actual supply from God the Father and from Christ, is governed by the receiving capacity of the body. "The effectual working" in the whole Body is truly the working of Christ; but it must

The compact
unity of the
body.

be borne in mind that His working is "according to the measure of every part." The inworking energy from our Divine Head, depends on the co-operative energy of the members. Neither the measure of Christ's indwelling, nor the might of His working, can exceed that which every joint can communicate, and every part receive. I am afraid we must say that Christ has no body on the earth which can receive Him. Answering to the measure in which the Church is receiving and transmitting His operative power, He is building up the powers of His Love in her. The Church could never in any real or true sense be "the Body of Christ," unless the substance of Divine Love, which is the substance of Christ, were built up in her. But through such members as we are, our Divine Head is able to communicate very little of His upbuilding love. He is straitened in us. The mighty works which He desires to do, He cannot. By the selfishness and the worldliness of our hearts, His hands are bound, and His Spirit restrained. Yet there is no ground for discouragement. Much is done; and the day of God's power is surely coming, when all true believers will put on new strength, and grow "with the increase of God."

Col. ii. 19.

A sad reflection.

The proneness of believers to "mind earthly things," and not the things of Jesus and His kingdom, cost Paul many tears. He looked on the earthly mind as the enemy of the Cross of Christ. "*I testify in the Lord*," he writes, that henceforth you walk not as the nations walk. He is sure that his earnestness is "*in the Lord*." The world is one spirit, the Lord is another, and very different Spirit. The Spirit of his Lord wrought very mightily in Paul's soul. He testifies "in the Lord" that the nations are walking "in the vanity of their mind." He charges believers to rebuke this vain mind. There is neither life nor peace in it. Deceit and death are in it, and it leads to death. The vain mind, which makes this present world, and not the kingdom of God, its object, is nevertheless very acute. The children of God are less wise in the things which pertain to their eternal kingdom, than are the men of the world in the things of the world. For the

Paul's earnestness.

The vain mind.

knowledge, pleasure, and glory of the flesh, they have keen appetite, and in the pursuit of them evince rare skill and devotion. They would rather not be told that the only knowledge, pleasure, and glory, which they covet, are *vain*. "Satan deceiveth the whole world." No one can look the world fairly in the face, or see it as it is, until his affections have grasped the true human world, in Christ Jesus. The sphere of vanity is not boundless, but it is great enough to impose upon all mortal creatures. It is as broad as all visible things, and as long as time. Man being an eternal creature, but living in time in a mortal body, whatever attracts his notice, or love, and yet is incapable of yielding him anything in eternity, is vanity. The present world is not the soul's true or right object. Its knowledge is not the eternal knowledge, its pleasure is not the eternal pleasure, its glory is not the eternal glory; but it allures the soul as though it were: thus it deceives and cheats men. "Surely every man walketh in a vain show."

Until the Son of God hath opened our eyes, we see nothing but vanity, we desire nothing but vanity. One beam of the true glory disenchant the soul, and spoils the glory of the world. The mask falls; the world is seen into, that it is but a flattering vanity; Satan's spell is broken; and another immortal is escaped out of the snare of the fowler.

The positive
character of
ignorance.

The natural man cannot see the vanity of the worldly life, for his "understanding is darkened." "The ignorance that is in him," and by which he is "alienated from the life of God, is something positive. Positivism is the boast of the vain mind. The whole sum of his knowledge is ignorance, his reason is the organ of his ignorance, his will is the tenacious ground in which his ignorance has its root and life. A darkening and a hardening process go on together in his soul. At thirty, he is much darker and harder than he was at fifteen, and at forty, still darker and harder than at thirty. "Because of the hardness of his heart" his understanding is more and more darkened; and under the progressive darkening of his mind, his heart is more and more hardened. He has lost his divine

"Past feeling."

sensibility; and the natural consequence is, he gives himself up without restraint to whatever accords with his vain mind and unrenewed heart. He settles down into naturalism, "into the wisdom of this world," and thus falls a prey to the system of error, and the fascinations of vanity. Instead of cleansing himself from all filthiness, both of the flesh and spirit, he resigns himself to the dominion of the world and the flesh, and the nearer he approaches to eternity, the more unfit is he to dwell with God. By his vain knowledge he is fortified against Divine knowledge; having long lost the sensibility of his youth, he cannot repent; having sold himself to the spirit of time, his soul is in utter disagreement with Christ, and the whole kingdom of Heaven.

Awful issue.

CHAP. IV. 20-24.—*But you have not so learned Christ; 21 If indeed you have heard Him, and have been taught in Him, as Truth is in Jesus: 22 That you should put off, according to your former manner of life, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And become renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that you should put on the new man, which has been created according to God in Righteousness and True Holiness.*

You are delivered from the old vanity of the nations, the light of which darkened your understanding, and the life of which alienated you from God. You have found new light and life in Christ. In Him you are come to the eternal light, the eternal life. Paul says not, If you have heard me, nor if you have heard about Christ; but "if you have *Him*." For he had taught many about Christ, who yet had not heard Christ, and who were not walking in the light of His life. He weeps over those who had only heard him, and had not heard Christ speaking in their own souls. With all their outward knowledge of the history of Christ, he calls them "the enemies of the Cross of Christ." There is an immense distinction, therefore, between being taught by Paul, and "taught in

To be taught by Paul, not enough.

Christ." Who is Paul? Who is Apollos? he asks. Are they not, and all other teachers external to the soul? Christ is within man. He and He only can break up the darkness of the natural mind, and deliver the soul from the learned ignorance of this world's wisdom.

Let us first of all briefly, and as lucidly as we are able, set before us Paul's teaching in this place, and afterwards open it somewhat more fully.

The subject, in brief,

The centre from which he starts is Truth, not truth as the nations of the world, or any natural man holds it, but "*as Truth is in Jesus.*"

"If you have heard Him and have been taught in Him," you are made aware of the necessity of putting off one nature, and of putting on another.

The one must be put off, because it is corrupt and not according to God, the other must be put on, because it is "created according to God in Righteousness and True Holiness."

and more fully.

"Truth, "*as Truth is in Jesus,*" is older than the world, and by its inherent power is able to supplant every form of worldly life and being. By bringing His truth into it, "God has made foolish the wisdom of the world." But "not many wise men after the flesh" will suffer their wisdom to be made folly by the invasion of Divine Wisdom." "The wisdom of this world comes to nought because it is not according to God. The world, not being an eternal form of being, cannot teach absolute truth. "We speak the Wisdom of God," "which God ordained before the world," and which is "settled for ever in Heaven."

A greater attraction than our own nature.

Apart from what are called the religious bearings of the subject, there is surely something very alluring, almost bewitching, in the idea of ceasing to be "old" and "corrupt," and becoming "new," and incorrupt. The Truth in Jesus, which is simply a discovery to us of the everlasting order of things, requires us, first of all, in spirit, and finally in fact, to put off our existing humanity. It is corrupt according to the deceitful motions and workings of transient existence. In

order to become eternal men in the heavens, we must be interiorly new made, according to the nature of the heavens.

Now to get rid of the corrupt element in our nature, to be relieved from all its vanity and transitoriness, to be no longer subject to the base temptations and pleasures of deceit ; but to be "renewed in the spirit of our mind," or in other words, in the very spring and fountain of our life, until our whole nature becomes a new and glorious thing, is, to say the least, an immense improvement on our present experience.

But this desirable change is precisely what eternal Truth, The question. or the Truth in Jesus, commends to us. The whole question which the gospel brings before us is one of natures. Will you retain that which you have ? or will you decline it, "put it off," in favour of a new nature of transcendently higher qualities ? You know what you have received from your parents and nature ; will you exchange that, for a diviner form, which the Son of God, by the Power and Spirit of His Divine Humanity, will generate in you ? Is it your will and desire that your inner man should take on a spirit and character, according to the humanity which you have now ; or would you put away, from your inner man, the spirit and character of your present nature, that you may be a new man after God, such as Christ is, "created in Righteousness and the Holiness of Truth ?" Such as the inner spirit and principle of your life are, such will be your future form. "God gives to every seed its own body." Only from the "seed, Christ," can you have a future humanity like Christ. Recognise the fact that every human soul is being made for eternity, according to its own prevailing affections and sympathies, and you will at once perceive the grave importance of cherishing, in all the warmth of your love, desires for the transformation which the Truth in Jesus presses upon you. This truth teaches you how the body of death may be Joyful news. put off from your soul, and divine humanity put on. It teaches you how weakness, corruption, and every taint of the flesh and spirit, may be put from you, as far as the east is from the west, and how you may be transformed into God-like men. No

other conceivable news could be half so joyful as this "Truth in Jesus."

Paul does not say that he quotes the very words of our Lord; but he does affirm that, in substance, this is what you have learned from Christ, "if indeed you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him." Suppose we add here some of the actual words of Christ. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it." "He that loveth his life shall lose it; he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." This all-essential truth was so often heard from the mouth of our Lord, and so deeply impressed the Apostles, that we find the paradox in no fewer than six distinct places in the Gospels. And Paul's words are but a lucid paraphrase of our Lord's sentiment. "You have not so learned Christ," as to think that you can live according to the leadings and desires of your vain nature, and yet be saved. "If so be you have heard Him, and have been taught in Him, as Truth is in Jesus," you know, and are assured that there is but one way of salvation, viz., "by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit," or in other words, by putting off what you are by nature, and putting on Christ Jesus, in whom God has created man anew in the eternity of His Righteousness, and the Holiness of His Truth.

For Jesus not only taught the Truth of God, but fulfilled all its requirements in Himself. All that we are taught to put off, died in Christ; and all that we are to put on, lives for ever in Him. The Christian's daily cross is his own nature, which he must oppose, deny, and devote to death, "that he may win Christ, and be found in Him." "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."

It comes to this, that there is a condition of human nature which is under God's condemnation, and which it is impossible even for Him to save from confusion and wrath: and there is a condition which He entirely justifies, or approves. Con-

John iii. 3.

Matt. x. 39.
Matt. xvi. 25.
Mark viii. 35.
Luke ix. 24.
Luke xvii. 33.
John xii. 25.

Matt. x. 38.

templating his own natural condition, Paul calls himself a "wretched man," and asks, Who shall deliver me from this evil substance, and body of death? Who shall make me another man, and bring me from under condemnation? He had found an answer, and replies, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Again, and again he reiterates, in Rom. v. that our condemnation is come upon us, as a nature, through one man, and that our justification is now being given to us, as a new nature, through One Man, Christ Jesus. Moreover, he teaches that the Source and Cause of our justification is as near to us, as the source and cause of our condemnation. The spirit and power of the fallen man is in our souls; the Spirit and Power also of Jesus, the Son of God, is in our souls. "Say not, Who shall go up to Heaven, to bring Christ down," &c., &c. "There is now therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." It is the law of our own nature which works our death; it is the law of His nature which works our life. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In order to be saved, we must withdraw our will from the working of fallen nature in us, and give in our will to the working of Christ in us. "Christ in us,"—there is our sole hope.

Unless a man be a partaker of Christ, he is none of His. As we should say of any angel, or spirit, who was not a partaker of our nature, he is not one of us. If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is surely undergoing a process of renewal, the old, corrupt man is being supplanted, and the new man, "after the power of an endless life," is being created. How should it be possible for a man to live with God and His holy angels, unless he were first created and made for this very purpose. Says Paul, in another place, God "hath wrought us for this self same thing," that when we leave the mortal body, "we should not be found naked" of divine qualifications; but already "clothed upon" with a celestial nature, and thus constituted for Heaven. And God Who has so wrought us, "hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit," Who talketh within us, and persuadeth us concerning our Hope of a personal nature, "a Building of God, Eternal in the Heavens."

“Our house
which is from
heaven,”
growing under
the Cross.

There is, therefore, something most sweet and blessed, as well as painful, in the law by which we put off the old man, and put on the new. Under the grief and cross of our fleshly soul, our heaven is growing. The power by which we hate our own life, is the presence of the Divine Love which glows in us, and feeds the inner man with a peace and joy out of heaven. No man glories in the fulness of his life, as does the cross-bearing follower of Christ. “The Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon him,” and is the element in which he lives, breathes, and inly works, putting off his old, and putting on his new nature. The foundations of Adam are giving place, in him, before the mild glories of Christ. His Lord's joy is his strength. No one regrets that winter is going out, when summer is coming in. No one who awakes from death, clothed with a body of light, will mourn the loss of the earthly body. “I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness.” But whoever departeth this life unrenewed, and naked of the Heavenly form, will see his shame, and in pain and confusion, seek a hiding-place from the Presence of the Lord and the glory of His Power.

Men in mortal bodies, it is high time for you to awake from your dreams, and make the most of your opportunity, in putting off the degradation, and putting on the Divine beauty and glory of your inner man. Whereof the pattern has been shewed to you in Jesus; as also the Power which worketh thereunto is given to you in Him.

CHAP. IV. 25-29.—*Wherefore putting away falsehood, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his own hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good for profitable edification, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

The old man is not to be put off by one act, but by a series of self-conquests, dating from the first day of our discipleship, to our last breath on earth. To overcome and cast out Adam, and to receive Christ Jesus the Lord are the work of our whole life. The spirit of the flesh longs to reign, and the Spirit of the Lord Jesus seeks to reign, in us. The strife between the two constitutes that daily cross, which we must take up.

The daily Cross.

1. There is in us a very subtle tendency to deceit and lying. We must watch and daily resist this tendency, "putting away lying," and every species of deceit.

Rooted evils to be rebuked unto death.

2. We are susceptible of anger, and anger may become hard and revengeful,—a great ravager in the soul. We must put away this spirit, or it will surely put away from us the Spirit of Christ.

3. There is in us by nature a stronger tendency to take from others, than to labour for their good. We must correct this tendency, until it be reversed.

4. We have much folly and corruption in us, through which we are in danger of defiling many. We must set a strict watch over the outlet of the mouth, that we may strangle folly and corruption at their birth.

1. Lying. Charge a man with lying, and his pride instantly bursts into a flame of indignation. It is strange that the temptation to lying should be so strong, since it is universally felt to be cowardly and disgraceful. A person having told a lie, will tell not two, but twenty lies, to cover it; nay, will perhaps lie as long as he lives, rather than confess his lie.

Lying.

The spirit of the old serpent, that liar from the beginning, is so entwined with our spirit, that we shall never be wholly free from it, until we have wholly put off the old, and put on the new man. If we were "conceived in pollution and shapen in untruth," what wonder that we go astray from the birth, speaking, acting, glancing, lies.

The subtle spirit of untruth shows itself in a tendency to overstate, or to understate facts, as the case may be; to put a face upon things which does not belong to them; to make a partial, instead of a whole disclosure; and by endless shifts

and sleek disguises, to choke and dissemble our actual knowledge and feeling. How many persons are there who tell a tale, or report a calamity, without adding a little colouring of their own? The simple, artless statement of a thing would often not sufficiently astonish the hearer, to be piquant and tasty to ourselves. The love of awakening wonder is a close relative of a lying spirit.

As children of God and disciples of the Truth, we must deny ourselves the luxury of untruth. In words, actions, looks and tones, we should be artlessly true, rather than plausible.

The charm of
artlessness.

There is a peculiar charm in artlessness. Whoever seems to be what he is not, is always less than he seems. But whoever seems to be just what he is, and nothing more, is more than he seems. For the atmosphere of Heaven plays about his person. He is at ease, as one who has nothing to take care of. Nothing so embarrasses a man as the desire to pass for what he is not. He is disguised and constrained by his heavy armour. He has nothing in common with heaven and angels. Even the children of the field, the primroses and lilies, know him not. They never assume postures or put on airs. They pretend not to be greater or brighter than they are. No sparrow apes the lark, nor the lark the nightingale. Each rests in being what he is, and looks, and speaks, and acts the truth, and nothing more. It is not wonderful therefore, that we find so much more of the spirit of rest by hedge-rows and river-sides, on the hills, and in the woods, than in drawing-rooms. Her Majesty breathes more freely in the Highlands than in Buckingham Palace. In the natural and unconstrained enjoyment of nature, we regard the approach of persons as an intrusion. They remind us of our artificial life, and oppress us. We are awkward until they are gone. This ought not so to be. It would not so be if our lives were simple and true. But we are false and cumbered with falsities, and consequently have a dread of our own kind, and are dreaded in return. Could we only be simply true to one another, as nature is to us, instead of banishing, we should enrich each

other's freedom. O Jesus, Thou Rose of our human Paradise, and Thou Lily of our valleys, when shall it once be?*

2. Anger. "Be ye angry, and sin not." If we are to be angry, and not to sin, we must never be angry with others, on our own account, but only for their good. If we are to be angry and not to sin, we must be careful that nothing rouses our anger but sin. If we are to be angry, and sin not, love must be the spring and soul of our anger. Even as when we reprove our children, though it be with warmth, or even with indignation, we are moved by the tenderest affection. So Jesus: "He looked round about on them with anger, *being grieved* for the hardness of their hearts." Pure love was the soul of His anger. Further, if we are to be angry and sin not, there must be present in our anger a spirit of unfeigned penitence and humility for our own sins. If we are to be angry and sin not, we must not be angry long. It must be soon over, and done with. "Anger rests in the bosom of fools." They know not that they are committing an assault against their own constitution. Anger poisons the blood, agitates the heart, sets up a vicious fire in the brain, makes every nerve in the body tremble, and violently drives away the Holy Spirit from His sanctuary in the soul. Anger utterly disqualifies the soul for meditation and prayer. It is the strange fire, which God abhorreth. No one can draw nigh to God while his anger lasts. Therefore the apostle's advice, "Let your anger die before sunset." If you do not, your soul will be a habitation for Satan, and not for the Holy Spirit,

Sinless anger.

Deadly anger.

* "We do not enough dread the slight and continual occasions of offence against Truth. We resent calumny, hypocrisy, and treachery, because they harm us, not because they are untrue. Take the detraction and the mischief from the untruth, and we are little offended by it; turn it into praise and we may be pleased with it. And yet it is not calumny nor treachery that does the largest sum of mischief in the world. But it is the glistening and softly spoken lie, the amiable fallacy, the patriotic lie of the historian, the provident lie of the politician, the zealous lie of the partizan, the merciful lie of the friend, and the careless lie of each man to himself, that cast that black mystery over humanity.

"The shortest way to check the darker forms of deceit is to set watch more scrupulous against those which have mingled, unregarded and unchastised, with the current of our life. Do not let us lie at all. Do not think of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unintended. Cast them all aside: they are an ugly soot from the smoke of the pit, and it is better that our hearth should be swept clean of them, without over care as to which of them are largest or blackest. The meagreness of poverty may be pardoned, the sternness of utility respected; but what is there but scorn for the meanness of deception?"—RUSKIN.

through the night. If Satan be with you, he will not be idle, he will strengthen the root of all evil in you.

Provide not
room for the
devil.

Therefore "Give no place to the devil." He can have no other place in you than that which you yield to him. He cannot dwell in you, unless you first provide him with the spirit in which he can dwell. When you give quarter to evil passions you give quarter to him. In love to God, and love to man, he can have no place. In humility and contrition, he can have no place. From our abhorrence of sin, and all our cravings after inwrought purity, he will be a great way off. When we walk in the spirit of the world, in vanity and the lusts of the flesh, when we are self-important, when we are heated with covetous desires, when we are irritable and impatient, we give place to the devil, and he is seated in the house of the soul.

Lamb of God, come to our help, reign Thou in us, that there may be no place for the evil one, that Satan, when he cometh, may find nothing in us.

Stealing.

3. Stealing. "Let him that stole steal no more." It may surely be cited as an evidence of the mighty energy of the Gospel, that it very quietly assumes that men, however depraved they may be, can be cured and made perfect characters. We need not say, *can* be cured, they have been cured.

Wonders of
renewing
grace.

God has no truer, and, perhaps no holier children, than men, who were once deceitful, lying, wrathful, fraudulent and abominably corrupt. We are bound, therefore, to look hopefully upon the basest of men. Liars and thieves, the revengeful and the unclean, may yet be not only new creatures, but "perfect in Christ Jesus." "Such were some of you." Such were many of the glorified spirits, who now walk and shine in the spotlessness of Christ's own purity.

Help men, by
your hope of
them.

If we despair of the wicked, so far as our spirit acts upon them, we cut them off from God, and shut them up in the prison of their own wickedness. On the contrary, our hope helps them by secretly disposing them to receive the love of God. From the least light-sparkle of God's love in them, will grow both the inclination and the power to cast off the works of darkness. Perhaps there are no powers or influences in the world which

so effectually bind men to their sins, and hold them back from Christ, as the cold hearts of Christians, who despair of their salvation.

There is no coldness in the heart of Jesus Christ towards any sinful, or most sinful, creature. The love which God specially commends to us, is His love to men, "*while they are yet sinners.*" Christ's word, therefore, to many a poor creature whom He found "dead in sins," and helpless under that death, was as life from the dead. "I do not condemn thee." "Thy sins are forgiven." "Go in peace." "Sin no more." Every such an one, heavily oppressed, and black as night before, walked away with an elastic tread, in the power of a new hope, the hope of becoming a new creature.

There is the low and coarse species of stealing ; there is also a refined species, which is quite as evil. The tradesman who knows that his expenditure is more than the profits of his business will cover, and yet continues to live, as long as he possibly can, on the capital and goods of his creditors, is a thief. "Let him steal no more ; but let him labour," and live, like an honest man, on the result of his labour. How many widows and elderly people in our day, have been robbed of their all, by joint-stock, thieving companies ! We blush and fear for our country as often as we think of the lying prospectuses, the loud pretensions, and the bold front, (like their architecture,) of our thieving gentry. Leave your fine houses, strip you of your fine clothes, and inquire by what honest labour you can serve the commonwealth, and earn your own bread. Labour is handsome, but polite thieving is dastardly, infamous.

Refined
stealing.

"Thou shalt not steal," neither in the rudest, nor in the politest manner. Steal not thy neighbour's character by private slander. If thou dislikest thy neighbour express it not, lest thou shouldst rob him of the goodwill of him who hears thee. Steal not thy neighbour's time. If you are not concerned to fill up your own time with good works, why should you hinder another ? If you steal the time of a diligent man, you rob him, and the world too, of a benefit. Steal not the good thoughts of thy neighbour, by occupying his

Divers sorts
of stealing.

attention with thy vain thoughts. Steal not the chaste affections of thy neighbour, by leaving upon him the taint of thy foul passion. And before thou allowest thyself by a glance, a touch, or a word, to draw to thee the heart of any creature, inquire whether thou meanest to be true and faithful to that creature for all time?

Work that
you may be
generous.

Instead of theft, every species of which is ignoble, the apostle commends to us the nobility of labouring for the benefit of others. Labour that you may have something to give. If you labour for money, that money may make you great, money will degrade and ruin you. If you labour for money, that you may have money to give to those who need it, you will labour temperately, and never be the slave of money. But you should not forget that your friends, neighbours, and fellow-men, have wants which money cannot supply. Moreover the wants which money can supply are but those pertaining to the low sphere of mortal life. Why not labour to overcome your own dulness, and to amass stores of brightness and cheerfulness, that you may have something more precious than money, and more comforting than sunlight, to give to all oppressed and downcast spirits? Why not labour to master your own sharpness, and to mellow your hardness, that you may be able to refresh men with your ripeness and sweetness? Sour grapes are unpleasant, but a sour man is worse. The sun ripens the grapes, and makes them a luxury for all men. But the love and beaming grace which flow from the spirit and countenance of a good man are a greater luxury. Labour to be a great possessor of the riches of God's Love, that you may have love to give to him that needeth. Nothing is so much needed, all this world over, as greatness of heart between man and man.

Corrupt
speech.

4. Corrupt speech. "*Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth*, but that which is good for profitable edification, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

The gift of speech is man's peculiar glory. It is the sign of his divine nature. It is his verification that he is the child of the Logos. It is an awful thing to abuse and pervert this

high faculty. It is the organ by which souls communicate with souls. Corrupt souls are diffusing their corruption, and sowing it in other souls, every day, and every hour of the day. Unregenerate souls will find themselves in eternity, complicated and bound up with all other creatures whom they have affected and corrupted by their tongues.

Corruption should always be covered and buried. If you speak it out, let it be in groans of self-loathing to God, that it may wither and die under the breath of His Holiness. The root that is allowed to put forth leaf and branch, strengthens itself thereby. If you desire a root to die, suffer it not to put forth its life. Suppress, and persist in suppressing the manifestation of its life, and in due time, it will have no life to manifest. It will be a dead root. You cannot, therefore, over-estimate the wisdom of the Apostle's counsel: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." Neither give vent to your own corruption, nor talk of the sins of others. You cannot touch defilement without being defiled. Use your tongue for no purpose by which any hearer could be tainted. If you bring to your friend, or neighbour, a corrupt subject of conversation, at the least you defile two souls, his and your own. It is one of Satan's most subtle arts to lead persons, who perhaps are too proud to commit certain sins, to speak against them with much warmth and self-righteous indignation. Two great evils are thus done. To talk of corruption is to diffuse it from soul to soul. Also in proportion to the warmth with which any one speaks of the sins of others, he feeds his own spiritual conceit.

Bury your own
corruption.

Let your tongue be sacred to that which is innocent, beautiful, and good. Let Jesus use your tongue that it may be an instrument of blessing. Why should your own tongue be your condemnation? If you do evil to others by the thoughtless use of your tongue, what will you say to them in God's judgment, when they rise up and charge you with the evil?

Give Jesus
your tongue.

Why should you not rather have a multitude of friends, in the judgment, who shall honour and bless you for the good

which you did them by your tongue? For the grace which you minister to them by your tongue now, they will minister to you their love in eternity. And in eternal life, he will be richest and happiest, who is loved most.

CHAP. iv. 30—v. 2.—*And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in Whom ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

31 *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice;*

32 *And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as also God in Christ hath forgiven you.*

CHAP v. 1.—*Be ye followers of God, as dear children; 2 And walk in love, even as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour.*

A tender
appeal.

A most tender appeal to “the new man.” Grieve not your Comforter! By your spirit, manners, and speech, you are constantly giving either pleasure or pain to those who live with you; but how much more to the Spirit of God, who dwells not with you, but in you! From other friends you can hide your thoughts and feelings; but nothing can be hidden from the Divine Friend, Who lives in the house of your spirit. He combines the eyes of God, and the Heart of Jesus. The love of your Eternal Father, and the tenderness of your Saviour make one Love-Spirit. Let this Spirit have joy in you, that He may comfort you the more. If He find rest in you, He will assure your hearts before God.

The sensibility
of the Holy
Spirit.

The sensibility of God's Love-Spirit is infinitely delicate. He is soon wounded. He has often left you ere you were aware. Until you found the house of your heart cold, dark, and desolate, you knew it not. And when He returns, He is so ardent and tenderly jealous, that if he be not immediately hailed and welcomed, by the mourning desires of the soul, He retires again. “I opened to my Beloved; but my Beloved had withdrawn Himself, and was gone; my soul failed when

He spake : I sought Him but I could not find Him ; I called Him but He gave me no answer." Were His love less tender, He would be less easily grieved. We could congratulate no child on having a cold, indifferent mother. It is impossible that we should wish the Holy Spirit to be indifferent to our condition. We will bless Him the more, love Him the more, that He is so soon grieved with us. His love to us "passeth knowledge," and as is His love to us, such is His grief, to find us as He would not.

You cannot break God's covenant, but you may violate your own interest therein. The Holy Spirit is the only seal that you can have, that you are an heir of God. When you grieve the Spirit, you loosen the seal between you and the promised inheritance. If by your continued walking in the spirit of the flesh and the world, you compel the Spirit to depart from you, you break the seal. You can abide in Christ no longer than the Spirit abides in you. "If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered."

The Seal of
the Covenant.

Of what avail will it be to us, in the day of redemption, to profess faith in Christ, if the Seal be gone? It is with that day in view that we are charged not to grieve the Holy Spirit. "The day of redemption" is not fully come. It is yet future. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." There is no believer on earth, perhaps, indeed, there is no saint in Paradise, who can foresee precisely what his condition will be on the great "day of redemption." Take heed, brethren, with a godly fear, lest, a promise being left you of entering into the kingdom of Glory, any of you should come short of it. The Jews, to whom the Gospel was first preached, have not yet entered into the kingdom of grace. "Let us labour therefore to enter into the Heavenly rest, lest any man fall after the same example of disobedience."

"The day of
redemption."

Heb. iv. 11.

Though this earnest pastor and bishop of souls has spoken plainly before, of what you should put away from you, he returns to the subject again, reminding you that there are certain affections and habits, which, if tolerated, will separate between you and the Holy Spirit. There is a hard and bitter

Put away your
hard spirit.

spirit in you which is the source of all your perverseness. Anger, clamour, evil-speaking, and all malice, are but the flowing out of your own bitter spirit. A hard, unloving spirit, under the veil of Christianity, is as far from God, as the hard spirit of one who is dead in sin. The Holy Spirit is a sweet spirit of love and goodwill, and is grieved by every manifestation of "bitterness." By "wrath" we must understand any sudden outburst from the bitter fountain in the soul. "Anger," on the other hand, signifies the fretful and irascible habit of this bitterness. A person of the sweetest disposition may be suddenly betrayed into a fit of bitterness; but an irritable, angry man has suffered this tendency to become his prevailing mood. This is a much more serious evil than an occasional outbreak of "wrath;" and requires much grace and watchfulness to overcome. "Clamour," again, is a sudden noisy ebullition of bitterness in speech, while "evil-speaking" implies that the tongue has surrendered to the habit of bitter speaking. "Malice" signifies the whole tendency of the bitter spirit. If you yield to your own cold and querulous spirit of ill-will, you will grieve, and drive from your breast, God's Holy Spirit of good-will. "Know you not, that to what spirit you yield yourselves servants to obey, *his servants ye are to whom you obey?*"

Amiability,
not grace.

Some persons have very little bitterness to put away; they are constitutionally meek and amiable. Others are constitutionally hard and bitter. Let not the amiable extol themselves over the unamiable; for there are amiable spirits which have even a smaller measure of the Holy Spirit, than the unamiable. Some are very amiable, and also very carnal; while their unamiable fellow-members display much more grace and spirituality. You will find some sharp-tempered persons who exercise a great deal of self-control, and also many sweet tempered persons who are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

Put on grace
towards all
men.

"Be ye gracious one to another;" "tender-hearted" towards the unhappy; and "forgiving" towards those who have wronged you, or fallen into sin. Put away all ungraciousness: put on graciousness. Show that you live, move, and have your being

in the sunny element of God's love. Let the grace of God, always, and towards every one, prevail over your own tendency to coldness and hardness. "God in Christ" has displayed no bitterness towards you. He has been kind, tender-hearted, and forgiving towards you. He expects you to abound in the same grace towards all men. Remember, that what you desire God in Christ to be to you, is to be your golden rule towards your fellow creatures. If you fail to observe this rule towards them, you will suffer for it before the judgment seat of Christ. "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst Me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?" Read also verses 34 and 35.

Be to them,
what you wish
God to be to
you.

Our translators should not have translated ἐν Χριστῷ, "for Christ's sake." It is not only an unwarrantable translation, but false teaching. It intimates that Christ supplied God with a motive for His grace. Whereas Christ Himself is "the gift of God." "The Father sent the Son to be Saviour of the world." "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me." "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-Begotten Son." The sufferings and death of Christ, were but the way which the Father took, to reveal, and bring nigh to us, "the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sin." "God commendeth *His Love* toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." In Christ, and through Christ, the gracious disposition of our God toward us finds free scope and play. "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

Matt. xviii.
32, 33.
ἐν Χριστῷ is
not "for
Christ's sake."

1 John iv. 14.
John viii. 42.
John iii. 16.

Rom. v. 8.

The Beauty of the Divine Glory having once passed before us, in the short vision of Jesus' Human Life, eloquence, poetry, music, painting, sculpture, have ever since been labouring to represent That Man. The Son of God has taken captive the passion, thought, and genius of men, by Himself living as Man. "Thou hast given Me Power over all flesh." "All flesh shall see the salvation of our God." Jesus is not only the Head of Humanity, but the Feet also. Quite as much in what is lowest, as in what is highest, He has the pre-eminence.

Because Jesus is God in man He will not make haste. He knows the end too well to be impatient. He knows that men themselves will not rest till all men follow Him. "I will draw all men unto Me."

The word "followers" expresses the sense too loosely. "Be ye *close imitators* of God, as beloved children." Some of His children, by ceasing to copy Him, have ceased to be His children. No trace of their parentage remains in them. Jesus copied God. He sacrificed Himself for us, that He might be a perfect copy of God. If, therefore, we imitate God, we must "walk in love, as Christ loved us," "Learn of Me." "I have given you an example." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself so to walk, *even as He walked.*" 1 John ii. 6.

It is much easier for children to scribble at random, than to imitate their copy. It is likewise easier for Christians to fall into their own spirit, than to imitate the example which God has given us in His Son. And I fear it must be said, There are no children who set their copy at nought, as some Christians do, the example of Christ. There are very few who imitate God, as carefully as school-boys imitate their copy. They are constantly lifting their eyes to the copy, while they suffer every movement of their hand to be controlled thereby. Are Christians in general half so careful to walk "as Christ walked?" God, in His Son, is "the perfection of Beauty," and His children should be varieties of the same beauty. "Let the Beauty of The Lord our God be upon us."

God has no other means of making His children admirable, than by winning them to the imitation of Himself. The beloved children of God, are His loving children. He has shown them, in Christ, how dear they are to Him; and it is the joy of their hearts to praise and magnify His Love. To extol Him in words and hymns is well; to extol Him by embodying His Spirit of Love in your lives, is much better. By loving Him we come to possess Him, and by possessing Him, we reflect Him; and as in possessing Him, is all our wealth and joy, so in reflecting Him, lies all our beauty. By

Copy God,
by copying
Christ.

Matt. xi. 29.

John xiii. 15.

Phil. ii. 5.

1 John ii. 6.

"The Beauty
of God" is
also beauty for
man.

loving Him and aiming to please Him, you will come to wear more and more of His Beauty.

By sacrificing His Humanity to God for us, Christ has shown us the endless profit and glory which will follow, if yielding to the fervour of the Divine Love, we also offer up ourselves an offering and a sacrifice to God. The Spirit of Christ, Which by the prophets testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, spoke even more fully and frequently of "the glory that should follow." And by going before us through time, to the glories of Eternity, Jesus has not only opened the way, but, as our Captain, led us in the way. "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps." "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, *arm yourselves with the same mind.*" If we "walk in love as Christ loved us," the sweetness of His sacrifice will become effectual in us, and be a sweet smelling savour to God. But all our prayers and solemnities, and all our faith and zeal, are nothing to God, if the spirit which was in Christ Jesus be not in us. He has told us beforehand that there are "many" who will call Him "Lord, Lord," to whom He will have to say, "Depart from Me, I know you not." Christ in us is Salvation. Christ's death rested in, but not fulfilled in the soul, is delusion. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. vi. 6. "Now *if we be dead with Christ*, we believe that we shall also live with Him." ver. 8. It will be better for us not to think that we can live with Him on any other than these New Testament conditions.*

The gain of sacrifice.

1 Pet. ii. 21.

1 Pet. iv. 1.

Gal. v. 24.

Rom. vi. 6.

Verse viii.

AN EASTERN PARABLE.

* A pious man of old, living in the East, having three sons and an immense fortune, made the following proposals to his sons, when they were grown to manhood: "Go," said he, "my sons, from my roof for one month, and return; he that performs during his absence, the best and noblest deed, shall receive one-half my estate, and the other half shall be divided between the other two brothers." They went, and returned at the stipulated time. The eldest began the story of his month's philanthropy. "I was walking along the banks of one of our native streams, and I heard the shrieks of a female. I hastened to the spot from whence the cry proceeded, and lo! it was a mother in the very act of leaping into the flood to save her boy, an only child of four years old, who had fallen in, and the waters were choking his life. Had the

CHAP. V. 3-10.—*But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; 4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking nor jesting, which are not becoming, but rather giving of thanks. 5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience. 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them. 8 For ye were once darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of Light: 9 (For the fruit of the Light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth:) 10 Proving what is acceptable to the Lord.*

Christ has
overthrown
the old world.

We need not compare the Christian Church with heathenism, for the Christian world, as compared with heathenism, is a new world. Compared with the masses, as they were before Christ, multitudes of our unrenewed men are perfect saints. Though

mother made the desperate leap, they both must have perished together. I bade her desist and I plunged into the roaring current. By hard struggling I saved the drowning child, and restored him to the arms of his mother.

"Thou hast indeed done nobly, my son: immortality shall record that deed, and the mother shall cherish thy memory with tears of gratitude. My second son, what hast thou to say?" "Father," said he, "in my journey I found an old man lying on his couch, feeble and decrepit; he could not walk nor rise up. Two little children were left with him; their parents had gone to a neighbouring town, about ten miles distant. The old man was sighing heavily, and the children wept bitterly. The bleak winds murmured through the trees; the ground was covered with snow; the cold was piercing and terrible. 'And will your parents return to-night,' I enquired of the lad, as he stirred up the little fire on the earth. 'They have been gone four days,' was the reply, 'and we are starving, and can neither go for food, nor for father and mother!'" I hurried back to the nearest house I had left, to obtain food for these famishing ones, and information of the parents. The former I procured, but of the latter I could obtain no tidings. I went in search of them, and when within a mile of the village, I was informed, to my amazement, that they had been found *dead*, having perished in the snow! I need only say these orphans, and the more helpless old man, are to share in my patrimony whatever it may be."

The father burst into tears, and could only say, "The youngest brother." The youngest son now began:—"On my return homeward, having almost despaired of accomplishing my wishes, I found a man prostrate and bleeding on the cold ground. He was my *bitter enemy*. He must have perished in a few hours had there been no assistance. I took him to a hospitable shelter, and he is rapidly recovering." "My dear boy," said the father, "to *that*, to *that*, belongs the reward! Were it the world, thou shouldst have it. Thou hast sanctified humanity, and spread the ante-past of heaven. Thy brothers have done well, nobly: but thou hast acted God-like! Thine is the spirit of heaven."

not professing faith in Christ, their nature has been greatly modified by Him. In a certain sense, they have been renewed, and they know it not. Unawares, the generations have received a moral tone, and even a new ground of thought, from Christ. Whether men will or not, Christ is forming them. Compare even our civil laws with the religions of the old world, and you will be compelled to acknowledge that the powers of darkness have wonderfully given way before the kingdom of Heaven. Things which are now held in abomination by the whole of Europe, were not only tolerated, but encouraged in the very temples of heathendom.

To his converts from heathenism, Paul writes: Let not your old vices be once named among you, as becometh saints. Every species of uncleanness is more than an offence, it is an outrage, against the new nature in Christ. The breast of a Christian disciple is to be sacred to the purity of God and heaven. Beware of a passion, which, though called by the name of love, is the filthy fire of hell, and desolates the soul of every pure affection and good tendency. Cultivate a very horror of uncleanness. "The pleasures of sin" destroy the aptitude of the soul for the pleasures of Heaven.

Way to hell.

Beware also of covetousness. Uncleanness and covetousness are very distinct sins, but they have one root. They are the working and manifestation of the same fallen spirit. The covetous man may have a proud contempt for the dissolute; but he is greatly unclean in the sight of God. He is spiritually an adulterer. He is turned away from God to mammon. And mammon holds his slaves more tenaciously than Venus. Twenty will grow weary of the service of the goddess, before one will withdraw from the service of mammon. If mammon has your soul, God can only have the profession of your soul, not your soul. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Covetousness being a greediness for gain, a craving for one's personal advantage, is not only incompatible with true love to God, but destructive of love to our neighbour.

Covetousness is also a way.

Likewise "foolish talking and jesting," than which nothing is more common in the world, are to be held in dis-esteem by

Foolish talking and jesting.

all Christians. They should look upon themselves as a new order among men. Things which are regarded with favour by the children of time, are to be abominated by the heirs of an eternal royalty. There is no relation between jesting and the end which a Christian has in view. "Foolish talking and jesting" are not only unsuitable to his character, but inimical to his preparation for heavenly society. They profane his spirit, and make him less susceptible of Divine Wisdom. They are therefore, "not convenient," that is, not adapted to reach the end which he contemplates.

To many persons, the condemnation of "foolish talking and jesting" will seem needlessly severe. Jestings is evidently regarded as comparatively innocent. The liveliness and good humour of certain spirits overflow in this way. Very estimable Christian men and women, without a scruple, make themselves and others merry by witticism and banter. It is as natural for them to jest when they are in a genial mood, as to eat when they are hungry. But this playful agility and friskiness of spirit are much more related to the baboon, than the angel-species of humanity. It is shallow and frivolous, and has absolutely no relation to the serene joy of wisdom and goodness. Its characteristic is a grin, which is not a sign that the heart is full of either truth or gladness, but rather that it is empty of both. If we keep before us the serene dignity and royalty of our new nature in Christ, we shall be in little danger of yielding to buffoonery. Foolish talking and Divine Wisdom have nothing in common. Jestings is greatly at variance with a reverential spirit. We can imagine great cheerfulness, a "fulness of joy," in Heaven, but we cannot imagine a jester there. Loquacity, joking, and playing the fool, cannot befit divine men and women, who are expecting shortly to be introduced to innumerable angels, and the "saints in light."

Holy mirth becomes us; Christians, above all men, should "abound in thanksgiving." But let us beware of the mirth of fools, which is "as the crackling of thorns under a pot." "The end of that mirth is heaviness." Even Seneca said: "True joy is a severe thing."

Christ redeems us from the shallow mirth of the world, which is the mirth of folly, to the joy of wisdom, which is the joy of God, and which fills heaven, and will fill eternity with delight and song. But the Holy Spirit testifies and forewarns us, that there is no gate of grace which will admit any soul into heaven, without personal holiness. No unclean spirit, nor any mammon-loving man, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God. Christ saves men in no other way than by constituting them exalted and glorious characters. And the only method known to Him, of giving to men true nobility of character, is by making them "partakers of the Divine Nature." Even coming to Jesus is of no value to the soul, unless it be followed by the interior growth of a Christ-like nature. To certain converts, who had experienced great blessedness in their first knowledge of Christ, Paul writes: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again *until Christ be formed in you. . . . For I stand in doubt of you.*"

Gal. iv. 19, 20.

The degenerate teachers and preachers who were springing up in the Church, and drawing away multitudes of disciples after them, were a sore affliction to the apostles. According to these new teachers, salvation does not consist in making men partakers of Christ, and thus Christ-like, but by a direct act of sovereign grace, irrespective of their renewal in righteousness and true holiness. "Certain men have crept in," writes St Jude, "who turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness." And in all his epistles Paul bears his testimony against "the enticing words" of "another gospel," and warns the Churches of the "false apostles," and "deceitful workers," who were "transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." "I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy. . . . I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ." "Beware!" we repeat in this late age, of a plausible gospel, which is "after

The enticing Gospel, which is "not after Christ."

2 Cor. xi. 13.

2 Cor. xi. 2, 3.

Col. ii. 8.

2 Cor. xi. 14.
15.

men," and "after the world," but "*not after Christ.*" "Let no man deceive you with vain words." Beware of teachers who too readily enlist your sympathies. Perhaps their own advantage may be their chief end. One of Paul's maxims was: "If I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." There is a honied gospel which is one of Satan's most successful traps. "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." When words of grace, promise in God's name, what God will never fulfil, delighted hearers are deceived by "vain words." Instead of the Holy Body and Blood of their Lord, they receive a piece of Satan's honey-comb. And we cannot be surprised that Satan's honey-comb-gospel, which spares the flesh and its affections, should have more believers among men, than "Christ's Gospel," which crucifies the soul to the world, and the world to the soul. How could the Gospel which Paul preached be popular in such an age as this? For example, that every "covetous man is an idolater," and that no such man "hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." The popular gospel, by a plausible handling of the sufferings and death of Christ, opens a very "wide gate" to the kingdom of heaven, a gate which passes men on, without requiring them to be qualified. But Paul cries back over the centuries, "Let no man deceive you with vain words." A Gospel which comforts men, but does not "transform" them, "renew" them, make them "new creatures," "partakers of Christ," and "changed into the same image," may carry them to the gate of heaven; but "from the very gate of heaven there is a way which leads to hell."

The way of
presumption
and delusion.

If thousands and tens of thousands should presume upon the gospel, and hope for eternal life, while they walk after the flesh, and not after the spirit, Christ and His apostles have forewarned you that it is the way of delusion. Thou shalt not follow the multitude. "Be not ye partakers with them." If you are found at last to partake of the character of the un-

regenerate, you will surely partake with them of "the wrath of God."

"If you say that you have fellowship with Christ, and walk in darkness, you lie, and do not the truth." The name of Christ will not benefit you, unless you walk in His light. If you walk in the light, as He is in the light, His blood is cleansing you from all sin; but not otherwise. "Many" are still in Adam, who think they are "in Christ." That is, their sympathies and affections remain with their first nature. Therefore their sin remaineth. They have lost sight of the necessity of being "created anew." Salvation is unison with Christ. Our supreme affections cannot be set both on new human nature, as it is in Jesus glorified, and also on "the old man." Be faithful with yourselves. God is not to be mocked by names or appearances. In what direction do your affections move? What is the prevailing character of your thoughts? Are your tastes those of the world, worldly, or are they changed and renewed by the Spirit of Christ? Are your eye and heart fixed on your risen Lord, and has He an actual supremacy over your spirit? or, are His purity and sweetness quenched in your carnal mind?

1 John i. 7.

If you are "light in the Lord," His light will bring forth its own fruit in your life. "The fruit of the light is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth." "Jesus Christ is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever,"—goodness itself, righteousness itself, truth itself. And all who name the name of Christ, must see that they depart from whatever is contrary to His Divine Nature. If therefore an angel should preach unto you doctrines of grace, which do not teach the necessity of possessing and manifesting the goodness, righteousness, and truth of Christ, be you sure that he is no angel of the Lord, but a "Satan, clothed as an angel of light." If the salvation of Christ made us partakers of eternal blessedness, apart from giving to us Godlike natures and characters, then (horrible thought!) Christ would be guilty of setting at nought the character and glory of God.

The fruit of
Christ's light.

There is therefore no more Christianity in the Church than

its members possess of "the goodness, righteousness, and truth of Christ." To be "accepted in the Beloved" is to be filled and clothed with what is beloved in Him. You must be made good in His Goodness, righteous in His Righteousness, and true in His Truth, before you can "prove" or experience "what is acceptable unto the Lord."

The good, the right, and the true, are the unswerving and eternal principles of the Divine Nature. There can be no variableness, nor the shadow of a turning here. Jesus revealed no other name of God than was proclaimed to Moses. "The Lord passed by before him and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." In the work of our salvation no new attribute is brought into display. The one Unchangeable Lord God, in order to our salvation, has brought the holiness of His Truth, and the meekness of His Glory, into our nature. The great work of reconstituting, transmuting our nature, is finished in the Person of Christ, that the Spirit of His Life may change us into the same image. "Ye are complete in Him." If His goodness, righteousness and truth reign in you, "they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But He that lacketh these things is" both "blind" and barren. God's "abundance of grace" is an abundance "of the gifts of righteousness." The only mercy which God sheds upon any soul, is the mercy which leads him, step by step, in the regeneration and renewal of his nature.

CHAP. V. 11-17.—*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. 13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. 14 Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and*

Christ shall give thee light. 15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore ye are not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

When Cambyzes would defend himself against the Egyptians, he hit upon the clever stratagem of putting between them and his army, *their own gods*. They will not assault their own gods. This is Satan's favourite method. He conceals the front of his hostility, under the name and cloak of Christ. By a subtle, plausible simulation of Christianity, he carries on a most successful war against the design of Christ. "I fear," said Paul, and events prove how much reason he had to fear, "lest you should fall a prey to the artifice of that old Serpent—Intellect, which beguiled 'the angel-creature,' Eve. 'I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy,' lest your minds should be corrupted, and your life in Christ supplanted by a crafty semblance." Indeed it was expressly revealed to the apostles by the Spirit, that the Church would be inundated by "seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." Falsities spoken with hypocritical sanctity, untruths speciously clothed, draw away many from the truth. A seven-headed conspiracy against the "simplicity that is in Christ," from the loudness of its pretensions, and the solemnity of its bearing, finds favour with multitudes. The most deeply reddened lie that ever was, or will be, current among men, claims for itself the sole vicarious authority of the Lord Jesus. The most haughty hiding-place of the Prince of darkness is under the Name of Christ. "I am Christ,"—the only True Vicar and Representative of Christ on the earth. "Here is the Mind which hath Wisdom!"—the seven-headed haughty wisdom, associated with an insatiable lust for spiritual dominion.

Satan's
masterpiece.

Rev. xiii. 1, 2

As foreseen by the apostles, so has it come to pass. Whole legions and nations are ensnared by the arrogant claims and reasonings of the archangel Satan. Under assumptions of superior sanctity and devotion, he carries on his most defiant works. A very "mystery of iniquity" in the name of Jesus!

Stand fast in
the Lord.

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." The princes of the intellect are more dangerous than the princes of the world. The self-styled princes of the Church are both more vain and crafty than all other princes put together. If we are not to be taken in any of the meshes of the six hundred and sixty-six-fold serpentine wisdom, we must be suspicious of the great organizations of men, and sit with singleness of heart and fixedness of resolve at the feet of Jesus. The simplicity of the life of Christ in us, is our only safeguard. And in no other spirit must we venture to reprove the subtleties of the seven-headed corruption. "Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man."

Rev. xiii. 18.

Put on
meekness.

The light of Jesus is very meek. The wisdom of the world is arrogant. By the meekness of your light, and the mildness of your goodness, reprove the pride and vainglory of the Church of the serpent. By the sweetness of your holiness, reprove their hollow sanctity. By a Jesus-like transparency of character, reprove the stealthiness of their plots.

Look at home.

To dwell on the works of darkness which were done in ancient Greece and Rome would be very unprofitable. What pen would dare to write, what eye endure to read, the things which are done all the year round in Paris and London? No villager need wander from his own village, in order to find works which will not bear the light. Indeed we need not go any whither exploring, we need not leave our own door; we may find within our own breasts more than enough to humble us. Let each of us sit still, and keep watch for a while in the silent house of his spirit: he will find things transpiring there which will suggest self-abhorrence, and clothe him with shame before God. Not only the kingdom of heaven, but the kingdom of darkness also is very nigh unto us, and comes without observation. Let us watch and pray, that we may have grace and strength enough to disown the inward imagery, with which it seeks to fascinate and pollute the heart. Let us hold no fellowship with the thoughts, which it stirs in us. Let us drag them before the light of God, that they may be made manifest, and reproved there.

Christ is the Light of God. "I am the Light of the world." Christ the Light.
"If I had not come you had not known sin." Nature and the world only reprove the things which are adverse to their own order. There are innumerable acts of sin against God, which nature has no means of revealing, nor the authority to reprove. Nature judges not of herself according to eternal laws, but only according to her own laws. The children of this world, therefore, will not come to the Light, Christ, lest they should see themselves in a painful light, and be reproved for much which the natural light of their conscience never reproveth.

"Death hath passed upon all men." But the same crafty spirit which once said, "You shall not surely die," persuades men that death hath not passed upon them. The false spirit contends that it is not death, because it is an intelligent, active, enjoyable life. And men, from the beginning, have believed the false spirit rather than God; for he reasons in accordance with the thoughts, feelings, and tastes of their fallen nature. But the truth of God confounds them. They cannot imagine that it can be death to be carnally minded, seeing that this carnality of mind is susceptible of a wide variety of pleasure. But death which was not a life could not be adverse to God, and therefore it could not be sin. If death be God's enemy it must be an active life. Nothing short of a personal will, at variance with God, could be His enemy. All natural men rejoice under the reign of the great and potent prince, which God calls death; and the evidence which they give of being "dead while they live," is, that they are satisfied with dead possessions, dead honours, and dead glory. As God understands death, they are dead. Within their temporal nature there is an eternal man, and this is the man which lies in a deep sleep or death. Their fine immortal powers are under the eclipse of their natural reason, in a delicious stupor, through the opiate-delights of the senses. We know that men can think, talk, do business, and find pleasure, in sleep, without dreaming that they dream. And myriads of ardent, busy, intelligent men, are but dreamy sleep-walkers before God. But the Great Father loves His dreamers, and would that they saw the True Light,

A "death hath passed on all men."

and knew the True Life. As near as is the light to one sleeping in the light, so near is Christ, the Awakener, to every eternal man, deeply as he may be asleep within his outer man. The sleeper has no sensibility of the light till he awakes, nor has the eternal soul in man, any sensibility of Christ, till he wakes and rises from his state of death.

When men dream that they dream they are not far from awaking. When the eternal light first startles the sleeper a strange experience ensues. What he took himself to be he is not. A dignity of which he had no suspicion he discerns to be his own distinction. He is a spirit-child of God, an immortal. His life heretofore has been but a busy grave in which his true life has been fast asleep, dead in sleep. But the voice of the Son of God has roused him. He can sleep no longer. He must rise and shake Satan's nightmare from his spirit. He parts company with the dead, for the life of Christ is pressing into him, and henceforth he is of the number of those who live unto God. That which makes manifest to us the grandeur of our nature, and the grandeur of our hope is light. Christ invades the soul, and it is day. Blessed invasion! The soul is a new creature. Heaven and earth are new. Beyond the plain of the worldly life, the heavenly mountains to which we are journeying come into view.

The Awakener
is in every
sleeper.

John v. 25.

God would not mock man by bidding him to "awake" out of death, and to arise to a new life, if the Awakener were not in the very midst of his soul to help him. God calls man from within himself. "The Resurrection and the Life" stirs in him, saying, "Arise from the dead!" and the man is already at the dawn of the heavenly life. As sun-rise pricks the sleeper, and says to him, Arise! even so the hour cometh when the dead soul hears the voice of the Son of Man, and hearing, lives. The gentleness of the Divine Love opens a new day within the man, and ten thousand noiseless arrows penetrate and startle his soul. They are the life-glances of the Quickener, to which the inner man responds, trembling in the pangs of the new birth, and, at the same time, blessing God with unspeakable gladness, that he is alive from the dead and an heir of heaven.

It happens daily that after the light has penetrated the eyelid of the sleeper, he recognises it for a moment, turns himself, closes his lid, and sleeps again. Take heed, lest after the arrows of Christ, which are gentler than the light, have wakened your soul, you do not sleep on in death. If, after you have discovered that Christ is the light of your soul's eternal life, you prefer to abide in your own carnality, which is death, rather than receive the Spirit of Christ, which is life and peace, you ought not to forget that you have, as an act of your choice, made a league with death.

Not only give a thousand welcomes to the new morning of your life and hope in Christ, but see that you walk in His light circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. As wakened travellers, with your hearts set on your journey's end, cautiously avoid all bye-paths. These alluring bye-paths all lead into the broad, tempting, highway of death. Countless appeals from without, and soft motions from within, will unceasingly entice you aside. It is the part of fools to set their hearts on the right end, but to lose sight of the means by which it can be reached. It is the part of fools to call Jesus, Captain, and after that to follow not Him, but the world. Christ, Who has awakened you out of sleep, is Himself your way home. Walking in Him, you walk in a Living Way. A Living Way gives life to those who walk in it. The life which the Way, Christ, gives to the traveller gradually renews him, and qualifies him for his celestial Home-life. Walk carefully, therefore, "as wise men." For if you slip out of the Living Way, and still think that you are travelling to your heavenly home, you are not wise. The spirit of the world is befooling you. You are not redeeming the time. Time is unfitting you for the end of your time.

Walk in the light, and walk carefully.

There is no other way of buying up the time, and turning it to your eternal profit, than by watchfully, prayerfully, day by day, walking in Christ. To "walk according to the course of this world," and the motions of your own carnal hearts, is more than to lose time. You are being both cheated and injured on your way. By flattering and decoying influences, time is succeeding in corrupting your heart; and instead of becoming

Make time serve your Eternal good.

“meet for the inheritance of saints in light,” you are in danger, on your arrival in eternity, of being found earthly spirits, and disqualified for the heavenly life. Because of the specious influences which are inseparable from these days of your pilgrimage, they are called “evil days.” Whether you redeem them or not, the days run on. Buy up the evil days. Number them, and look constantly to the end of them, that you may apply your hearts unto wisdom. Press the days into your service by pressing after Christ through all your days. Sow your prayers into the heart of God. Compel time to lay up treasures for you in your eternal home. By faith and prayer, bring the Spirit of your Lord out of eternity into your soul ; so shall you redeem time from time, and make it broaden your inheritance, multiply your friends, and increase your immortal honour and blessedness.

And this is “the will of the Lord” concerning you. He not only desires to save you, and see you for ever in heaven, but it concerns His glory that your reward should be great. The more you reflect Him, the greater will be His glory and your glory. He would that distinguished honours should accrue to you through all future ages, from your life in time. On the other hand, it is Satan’s desire, and the constant aim of all evil spirits, to get you so to live in time, that hereafter you shall reap no advantage from it, but rather confusion and dismay. It will be a source of malignant satisfaction to them, if, when your time is run out, instead of being nearer the end of your faith, you are farther off than ever from the salvation of your souls. Many, saith the Lord, who doubt not that they are mine, will awake from death to find that they have lost their time, and lost heaven. Time will not of itself bring forth in you the pre-requisites of your future honour and blessedness. Unless by your fixed, earnest will, you compel the flying days to contribute to your heavenly interests, time will most certainly qualify you for time, and not for eternity. But by bringing into time the Spirit of Christ, you can over-master the spirit of this world, and compel time to serve your eternity. Thus, instead of selling yourselves to time, you

will redeem time. Think of the noble recompences which some, now in heaven, are reaping from the use which they made of time. Think also of the losses and pains which departed souls must be suffering, who, instead of subjecting time to Divine influences and eternal considerations, suffered themselves to be wholly brought under the dominion of time. In Christ, you are time's master ; in the spirit of the world, you are time's slave.

CHAP. V. 18-21.—*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit ; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord ; 20 Giving thanks always, for all things, unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ ; 21 Submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of Christ.*

Ultimately, then, duty and inclination are to be one. For nothing is so tempting as spirit, more spirit. Whatever promises to inspirit us, is attractive in that proportion. To be filled with spirit, with the Right Spirit, the Good Spirit, the joy-inspiring Spirit, the ever-living, ever-young Spirit, is at once the call of God, and the condition of pure pleasure. Only in this way can God fill up our cup of joy, by filling us with His Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit, is strictly to be filled with Divine hilarity. "The fruit of the Spirit is joy." Hence, in the passage now under consideration, Paul makes the constant birth of psalms, songs, and thanksgivings in the soul, to be the natural consequence of being filled with the Spirit. Carry in yourselves, he says, the spring of all joyous inspirations. Let the Spirit of God freely flow through you, a river of life, fresh every moment from its source ; and, in the flow of this current, your inner man shall sing himself along through his pilgrimage, and, at length, into everlasting life. "The redeemed come with singing unto Zion, and the everlasting joy on their heads."

Duty and inclination at one.

Gal. v. 22.

Isa. xxxv. 10.

The end of
life.

The express purpose of our life in this world is to fit us to leave the world. Few boys think that the end of their school-life is to fit them to live in school. This world is our school of experience and discipline. But how few men are concerned to make any other use of their time on earth than to fit them to live and enjoy themselves in the world! In the real work of a man, all such must find themselves further back at the end of their days than they were at the beginning. They will not only find that they have everything to do, but, first of all, everything to undo. Apart from the most solemn and abundant warnings of holy Scripture, reason itself would certainly lead us to fear that it will be very hard in eternity to undo the work done in time, and to free the spirit from the consequences of having lived an earthly life. The seed being once formed, how can you develop any other plant therefrom than corresponds with the actual principles and qualities which are embodied in it?

We shall find
our own place.

Unless we are duly and truly qualified for it on leaving this world, we shall certainly not be able to live in a higher world. We shall find our own place. No substance can rise upwards and float in higher ethers until it is light enough to do so. But substances can be made lighter, not only by decrease, but by increase. Bodies are often made to fall by emptying them, and made to ascend by filling them. The weight of a thing can be overcome by adding to it a new element. The child blowing soap-bubbles is causing so much of the heavy water to leave the vessel and float upward, by adding to the water his own breath. And the power of ascension is given to us men by infilling our earthly souls with the breath of the Divine Man. But we must take good heed, lest, instead of being filled with His quickening breath, our souls should drink in the earth-spirit.

We know what it is to forget, and even for a time to lose the burden of existence, in a pleasant exhilaration. One of the advantages of youth, over old age, is that the body is sufficiently inspirited to save it from the sense of its own weight. Wine, tea, music, conviviality, and so on, are tempting, because they

lift us in some measure above ourselves. We are sensibly lightened, we breathe more freely, the heart feeds on joy, and gladdens the whole body.

Our desire to be spirited—"filled with spirit"—may be taken as an evidence that our true origin is not earthly, but that we are fallen from a higher condition, and that we are not quite at home under the encumbrance of an animal and mortal body. To relieve us from tedium, and to meet our desire for more spirit, the world is full of Satan's provisions. We scarcely need enumerate. Some will think of the seductions of alcohol. Others will think of gambling, hunting, racing. Others may instance the daily excitement associated with the attire of the mortal body. Then there is the literary morphia and soul-delirium, in ceaseless demand at all circulating libraries. Through legions of brains, male and female, the supply comes and comes. Happy are the people whose exhilaration is a soul-purifying process, kindling in them both heavenly thought and feeling. But the children of this world greatly prefer Mercury and Venus, Pan and Apollo, to Christ.

A hint of our origin.

The human mind cannot be void. If it have not the light of true wisdom, it will have the light of fallacies. Fleshly baits are not the temptations by which superior men are caught. Their understandings must be flattered. They must be decoyed by facts, and the science of things patent to their senses. You shall be leaders in the world of thought, "you shall be as gods," you shall open men's eyes to the reality of things. Beware of the strong drink of sense-bound intellectuality. Neither be drunk with the soul-bewitching magnetic ether of spiritualism. "The Spirit" will fortify both your understanding and your heart against all spirits, whether of the visible or the invisible world. "The Spirit" is our only safe inspiration. There is moreover, not only a calmer power, but a greater variety in the one Spirit of God, than in all the spirits which lead captive the human soul.

Not spirits, but "The Spirit."

God is not sparing in the ministration of wholesome excitement. Every new morning is a genial, delightful excitement. The seasons are an ever-changing round of excitement. Love

God's generosity in the provision of excitement.

and marriage are joy from Heaven, in earthly cups. Family-life is God's wine of fellowship all the year round. Every meal is a pleasurable excitement. Birth-days and feasts are special indulgences and celebrations of the excitement of home-life. The verdant glory of the earth, the tranquil heavens, and the works of our divine poets and musicians, are excitements worthy of heaven. The Gospel of our eternal hopes is the feast which crowns all; and the congregation in church, made up equally of friends and strangers, is a wonder of fellowship and a most pure joy of love. What a depth of sweetness, what serene gladness, what a variety of inspiration there must be in that One Spirit, whence all our innocent and noble excitements spring. The martyrs found an intensity of spirit-quickenings, on the boundary between life on earth, and life in heaven; not only proving that "death is abolished," but that all the joys of our earthly life, are but poor shadows going before our eternal human delights.

Divine
inebriation.

Drop your burdens, forget your labours and sorrows, and soar above the dull plains of mortality, in a Divine exhilaration. "Be filled," until you are lightened, and made buoyant, "with the spirit." You know what Pentecost did for the fishermen of Galilee. They became so superior to themselves, that those who saw and heard them were amazed, and marvelled at them. What has happened to them? Their heaviness, fear, and reserve are fled. They are clothed with power. "These men are full of new wine," some objected. Peter replied: "These men are not drunken as you suppose." God has simply been true to His promise, He has filled them with His Spirit. It is impossible that a new measure of Spirit should flow into man, without elevating all his powers. He is strictly "a new creature." "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." "You shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you." The Spirit of the world stirs man from without, the Spirit of Christ stirs him from within. The excitement that reaches him from without, is of a nature inferior to the soul, and debases her. "The Spirit" purifies and sublimates her.

Luke xxiv. 49.

Acts i. 8.

If you would carry a charm which shall enable you not only to resist the power of sensuous and degrading excitements, but all the bewitchments of the intellect, ask God, with the greatness of a child's faith, to fill you with the Spirit of His Son. The only sure defence against lower excitements, is in a higher excitement. Our safeguard against the whole circle of specious philosophy is in the intenser power and wider circuit of the Divine Spirit. The only excitement commensurate with man's spirit, and adapted both to refresh and exalt all its powers is the inspiration of Christ. Every other excitement is either tainted by some vicious excess, or less than enough. "The Spirit of Christ" alone is the "Spirit of rest" for man. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

A charmed soul.

Ps. lxxxi. 10.

As when the earth lies in dewy heat, waiting, with her innumerable pores and channels all open, to receive her day-spring, even so should the greater world of the human spirit lie open to the Spirit-Sun. A fiery, restless desire should be eschewed, as adverse to growth, and an inmost tenderness of ardour be cultivated. There is a desire which fevers and consumes the soul, and there is a desire which appropriates the divine love and feeds the soul. Healthy spiritual desire is a profound peace. But the peace of God is an appetite for God, and the deeper the peace, the keener is the appetite. The children of heavenly wisdom should study the conditions of growing weather, as a parable suggesting to them the laws of their own quickening and renewal. "The Lord said to me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling-place, like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." "He shall be as the light of the morning, when the tender grass springeth by clear shining after the rain." "My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch."

The nature of desire.

Parable.

Isa. xviii. 4.

2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

Job xxix. 19.

God's Spirit in the renewed heart is a secret, intense joy. The origin of song is divine. The songs of hell and of the wicked are but disgusting caricatures. The devil encourages his children to cloak their misery by an affectation of mirth. The unchaste and the intemperate drink of the delirious spirit of

Origin of music and song.

the abyss, and sing their filthy songs one to another. The children of God drink into them the Holy Spirit, and sing forth their heavenly delights. Apart from what is sung, the sounds themselves bear witness that their source is as distinct as heaven and hell. From eternity to eternity, the Spirit of God singeth the song of God. His song is an ever-changing variety of the infinite harmony and joy of the Divine nature. The poetic utterances of all inspired psalmists and poets, and the compositions of inspired musicians, only record for us the vibrative effects produced on them by the song of God, the song of His being and purpose. The Word of the Lord is so musical, that it makes the hearer musical, and necessitates a musical utterance. The prophets are poets. "The morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy," because the Chief Singer, "the Word of God," had sung Himself into the soul of their being. Consider the heavens! are they not the notes of the Divine Composer? Were they not sung into arrangement? In what other light are we to understand the rejoicing of the Eternal Word, before the Father, than as the joy of the Divine Nature ever and ever sounding out from Him. The glory which He had with the Father before the world was, is the glory of an intelligent bliss. The joy of the eternal, immutable harmonies of God's Being must be the very soul of music. We ought not to be surprised, therefore, that the Son of God is the Reconciler, "and able to subdue all things unto Himself." He will outsing the mad effort of divided and contending powers, and sing back His Father's order. He is Himself His Father's order, and the very Original of music.

Prayer.

O Spirit of the Father and of the Son, fill us, that the soul of song may be in us, and that we may be divine singers in Thee. Fill us with the Spirit which was in the beginning, and before Thy works, that the disorder of things temporal may not mistake us. O Word of God, Thou "joyful sound" in the highest, so fill us with the music of Thy whole plan, that "the oppositions of science, falsely so called," may affect us no more than the jabberings of idiotcy. We shall not stumble at that which is in part, when that which is perfect has its dwelling-place in

us. The battle-field wherein eternal love and the great enmity are at strife, will only heighten the joy and harmony of the song which Thy Spirit singeth in us.

Speak to yourselves, and to one another, ye children of God, as also you do, in hymns and spiritual songs. Glowingly, in the manner of the inspired psalms, talk and chant in yourselves, of the sweet wonders of the Divine Nature, of your eternal union with the Son of God's Love, and of that higher, nobler cosmos to which you are come. Sing of your glorious hopes, and let the enemy hear no desponding, or doubting note. "Abound in thanksgivings," with the springs and certainties of victory welling up in your heart. Let not Satan, nor the whole circle of evil, rob God of your confidence in Him. Sing of your future humanity, and of the endless reign of your life in Christ Jesus. Anticipate your immortal youth, and make a joyful noise in your hearts, and in your assemblies, to the Unchangeable Father. Joy in God opens a thousand gates at once. There are gates in the heart, gates in the mind, gates in the nerves and muscles of the body, and gates in the atmosphere, which may be either open to Heaven's tide of sweet influence, or shut against it. Unbelief and gloom shut the gates: hope and joy open them. But the gates are very secret, and when Heaven is pouring itself in, whether upon souls in their closets, or upon congregations, no one suspects how, or by what channels, the tide has come. The joy in God, of a single soul in private, may let loose a blessing that shall run round the whole earth in its mission of comfort, and carry in its glance the break of day to numberless sad hearts.

Let joy overflow in song.

In the world, the Divine life finds prose enough; but in himself, every child of God is a new divine poem and temple of psalmody. The understanding is not able always to appreciate the melody which is made unto the Lord, in the inmost chambers of the soul. The understanding misjudges it, and calls it groaning, because it has no ear to hear the purest music of the heart. "Blessed are they that mourn." God joys with singing, and rests in His Love, over His mourners. In the

A pure joy in sorrow.

bitterest cry of His Best Beloved: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" the Father hears the midnight singing in the morning to all broken hearts.

Verse 20. Wherefore we must set our sorrows to music, "giving thanks always, for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." We must rise up in our midnights to give thanks, because of our Father's righteous judgments. While it is yet dark, we must go forth to meet our joy. Perfect Love is the soul of every judgment. "The end of the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

James v. 11.

If in the present evil world, under deep darkness, and manifold infirmities, the renewed heart is a little world of melody to the Lord, what will be the joy of perfect men in a perfect world? What will song be in Heaven?

The Spirit is as humble as lofty.

But let it not be forgotten that the Spirit entenders and beautifies as much as it exalts the soul. The humility of God's children answers to their exaltation, as depth to height. If we are filled with the Spirit, we shall not only soar upwards on wings of song to the feet of God, but shall meekly "submit ourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." Every grace lies enfolded in the one gift of God. If our spirit of joy be not a lowly and companionable spirit, it is not the Spirit of Christ.

Verse 21.

CHAP. V. 22-33.—*Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and He is the Saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for her; 26 That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water by the word, 27 That He might present her to Himself, the glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 Thus ought husbands to love their own wives, as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For*

no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: 30 Because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I am speaking concerning Christ and the Church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

It should be particularly observed, at the very outset of Paul's teaching concerning the relationships of society, that he regards them all as sacred ; that is, they are in God the Father and in His Son Jesus Christ. God is the Spirit and life which underlies the orders of human life. Society should be a manifestation of the inter-relationship and mutual dependency among the powers and virtues of the Divine nature. Redeemed mankind are one body, from God and in God, and growing unto a holy kingdom in the Lord,—that is, Christ's fulness in development. It is scarcely possible to conceive a relationship more fitted to express and display the meekness and obedience of Christ than the relation of a Christian wife to her husband. On the other hand the husband's relation to his wife is that of Christ's to his redeemed. Children are to obey their parents "in the Lord," for He not only honoured and obeyed His Divine Father, but, up to His thirtieth year, wholly subjected Himself to the authority of Joseph and Mary. Parents likewise are to derive the spirit of their government from the Lord. Servants are to think, whatever masters they have, that they are serving Christ, and aim in all things to please Him. Masters are to remember that they are under the same Master as their servants, and that, in His sight, they are neither greater nor better for being masters.

The wisdom, dignity, and beauty of subjection are little understood in our world. The honour which most men covet is to have others under them. To create a fortune for yourself, by the subjection of many to your authority, is the desired honour. If by bending down the backs of a thousand, or ten

God Himself is the base, and Christ the Spirit, of all the orders of society.

The unenvied dignity.

thousand, of your fellow-men, you can elevate yourself, you will take your rank among the "great ones" of the earth. But according to our "Faithful and True Witness," such distinctions only pass for greatness in a corrupt and heathenish world. Genuine greatness—greatness recognised by the judgment of God—is of another order. Our King, Who throughout the whole kingdom of God is the model of greatness, humbles no one to exalt Himself, but humbles Himself rather to exalt the poor and needy. There being a strife among the disciples, "which of them should be greatest," Jesus taught them that in this world a very base, unheavenly standard of honour prevails. "Princes exercise dominion, and they that are great exercise authority; but it shall not be so among you. Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "I am among you as He that serveth."

Matt. xx. 25-28.
Luke xxii. 27.
The greatness of Christ.

Jno. vi. 38.
Jno. viii. 29.

The greatness, therefore, which the Apostle commends to Christian wives, is expressly the greatness of Christ. It is His glory and joy to be subject to the Father. "I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." "I do always those things which please Him." There is nothing servile in the meek subjection of a wife to her own husband. The very contrary: it is her crown of beauty. She is counselled to clothe herself with the dignity of Jesus. Moreover, the woman who has married wisely, and who respects her own marriage, puts on authority and walks in freedom, just in proportion as she is subject to her husband. The body can in no other way walk in power and freedom, than by being subject to its own head. The earth is beautiful so long as she is directly subject to her own sun. She no sooner enters upon the path of independence than she becomes cold and gloomy. The more complete her subjection, the greater is her freedom, and the more she sings and rejoices. In like manner, wives will find that subjection to their own husbands is the very law of their freedom and joy. Not only the wife's reverence, but her love, for her husband, inclines her in this direction. Wherein a wife hesitates to be subject to her husband, she must lose the sense that she is his wife. By

The wife's freedom,

an independent course of action, she virtually separates herself, asserts her self-sufficiency, and ceases to respect her wifeness.

If she only knew it, the path of subjection, appointed of God for the Christian wife, is an inestimable opportunity and privilege. Therein she will find the most favourable condition possible, for the growth and development of her eternal beauty. On no account let her look upon subjection to her husband, as having its end in time. It is a sacred thing. The root of it is in Christ, the flower thereof is in Eternity. The hidden wisdom, and the love and beauty of God are being embodied in her daily meekness. "The Lord lifteth up the meek." "He will beautify the meek with salvation." Home is the wife's empire, and she is exhorted to reign there, not after a vulgar, or worldly manner, but after a heavenly manner. Her free and loving subjection is a perennial means of grace. She renders it indeed to her husband, but "as unto the Lord."

— and golden opportunity.

Ps. cxlvii. 6.

Ps. cxlix. 4.

Many fair appearances are deceitful; but the beautiful deportment of a Christian wife is even more beautiful within than without. Jesus hides Himself under the veil of her quiet habit. By her own obedience, she rules her household. There is an air of majesty about her. Steadfast in piety, and self-possessed, an atmosphere of unknown power encircles her. Her husband may, or may not appreciate her sovereign humility. The Lord notes it. In His sight it is an ornament of great price. It is fragrant to the angels. Her thousand private acts, lost to common observation, are written in heaven. Many an excellent wife, buried in deepest obscurity, and withal, sorely tried, is yet sweetly fulfilling her course. Her fair monument, all unknown to herself, is being built in the presence of the Lord. Pure-hearted woman! she will do her husband nothing but "good all the days of her life." He may "safely trust in her," as in the quicker soul of his soul, the secret heart of his heart.

Fair without, fairer within.

The submission of Christian wives can neither be cold nor irksome, since husbands are required "to love their wives *as Christ loved the Church.*" The husband is never to be arbitrary, never an exactor. His love to his wife must be the motive-

Husbands, not exactors.

power of her submission. She is to be under no other constraint than that of his love. Submission to love is freedom and delight. "As Christ loved the Church," and by love won her over to Himself, before she was His Church; even so the husband loved his wife before she was his wife, and by love, won her to himself. In the same spirit of love by which he first won her heart, he must rule her to the last.

The word Church must not impose upon us, as though Christ loved the Church because she has put away her sins, and robed herself in His beauty. The Church has already inscribed it on enduring tablets, and in Heaven itself will never suffer the writing to be effaced, that He loved her when she was in her sins; that not for her beauty, but because she was destitute of beauty, and not for her righteousness, but because she needed righteousness, He devoted Himself to her.

This is a very high standard to set before husbands. If the love of Christ to the Church is the pattern of a husband's love to his wife, his love must rather spring from what he can do for her, than from what she is to him. He must bear with her weaknesses nobly, and love her still. In supplying her need, he must find his pleasure and reward. If he can be to her wisdom and strength, he will have honour enough. Let him be the generous sun of her life, and she will daily yield him more than ever enters into his thoughts to require.

But Christ's love is beyond comparison. Husbands, fathers, mothers, lay down their crowns at His feet. "Gave Himself for her," signifies much more than, gave Himself to her. Christ gave Himself over to shame, pain, death, for His bride. He loved her in her defilement, and bound Himself to life-long humiliations for her sake. By His blood-shedding, He has provided a Divine bath, to cleanse her from her pollution. Having cleansed her, He gives her His own loving, glowing purity, for her beauty, that in the presence of all the angels He may present her to Himself, a faultless, glorious bride.

"Water" is Paul's symbol in this place, for the medium of cleansing; but he immediately admonishes us that this bath is nowhere to be found, save "in the word." Paul will scarcely

Christ's
praise.

High stan-
dard: who can
attain to it?

The medium
of cleansing.

be suspected of a ritualistic tendency. Indeed he has carefully guarded us from ascribing a spiritual power to a natural element. Evidently, he uses the term water in the sense in which we frequently find it, both in the prophets and in the teaching of our Lord. "With joy shall ye draw *water* out of the wells of salvation." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life." "The *water* that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water." "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." If you use a physical element in faith, and for a divine purpose, you may rest assured that God is there. All the elements of nature are His garments, which may be used either lightly and thoughtlessly, or in reverence and faith. The multitude pressed about our Lord and obtained nothing, but the woman who but touched, in reverence and faith, the hem of His garment, was baptized by the mystery and virtue which flowed from Him. The grace of baptism is not in the visible element, but in the Divine virtue and power which are hidden therein. No administrator of baptism ever says, "I baptize thee in water;" but, "I baptize thee into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "Into the Name," is the same as saying, into the virtues and powers of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The only bath of cleansing for our souls is the adorable Trinity. No other water can lave, purge, and quicken our understanding and affections, than that bright Spirit-river, described by St John as "a pure river of water of life, resplendent as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." This is the water in which Christ baptises His bride. "I indeed baptize you with water," said John, "but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Every one who comes to Him for salvation, He subjects to "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit," till not a spot remains. Into our penitent and believing souls, He pours and pours His own Spirit of Life, not only to the removal of the last taint of corruption, but to our complete renewal in His own Incorrupti-

Isa. xii. 3.

Isa. lv. 1.

Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9.

John iv. 14.

John vii. 37.

Rev. xxii. 1.

Matt. iii. 11.

Perfect in
beauty.

bility. He leaves in His bride no ground of impurity, or decay. He makes her a partaker of His eternal youth, and clothes her with the robe, "exceeding white and glistening" of His own righteousness. Her likeness to Him being complete, the attraction will be mutual.

Marriage, a shadow of a higher mystery.

No one speaking by the inspiration of God, can speak of the union of husband and wife, as having its root and beginning in time. It is a shadow of a union which is Divine and Eternal. The subject is too high and sacred for our present investigation. We must wait for the pure heart and the exalted mind of our future state. We may be sure that marriage on earth bears but a very imperfect and remote resemblance to the original unity. According to our Lord's teaching, sex, as it is found on earth, finds no place in heaven. "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Paul affirms the same of our new nature, that, "in Christ Jesus, there is neither male nor female." The Son of God restores to us primary and eternal conditions. The union of husband and wife cover a mystery. "This is a great mystery." "It points back to the original unity of man. Man and woman are said to have been one before they were two. God made one angel man, whose nature involved the basis of what came to be the twofold development of man and woman. Each therefore, and far more intimately and profoundly than we can at present understand, belongs to the other.

Matt. xxii. 30.

Gal. iii. 28.

In tracing the marriage-union to its fountain-head, in one original man, we ought to go still further, until we come to its absolute root and beginning, in One Son of God. Man was created to be the image of His unity. In no true sense can a divided and sensual creature be supposed to be the likeness and image of God.

But woman being a development of man's deepest and tenderest nature, in loving her, he is strictly loving himself; in nourishing and cherishing her, he is nourishing and cherishing himself; and in embracing her he makes an approach towards the unity of his nature, as it was in the beginning. I

say an approach, for the veil is heavy, and our understandings are fettered by present conditions. When the man, awaking a divided creature, out of the oblivion of that strange sleep, saw his own Evah, an outward object standing before him, he said: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called man-ah for she was taken out of man." Gen. ii. 23. When instead of being a nature in himself, and immediately under himself, she became an external attraction, what is spoken of as "the fall" was very near. One division was soon followed by another. From being divided in himself, he came to be divided, (in a way that he had not conceived possible), from God and from heaven.

But God's eternal purpose included the fall, and through the fall, He helps us to a better and surer standing. Man's fall infinitely attracted the Son of God, and brought him under the fall. He will save both man and woman, and restore to each more than the completeness which each has lost. For what woman is to man, the human race is to the Son of God. "I would have you to know that the Head of every man is Christ." He cannot hate man, for man was taken out of Him. 1 Cor. xi. 3. "It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves." He shrinks not from the consequences of our weakness and inexperience. "I will carry you; I have made and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you." He is under the necessity of His own nature, in making one lot with man. Isa. xlv. 4. "As one whom His mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Isa. lxvi. 13. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall man leave His father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Let it be carefully observed, that these words, primarily refer to the relation between the Son of God and His mankind, and only secondarily, to the union of husband and wife. He had no sooner written them, than he immediately added: "This is a great mystery; but I am speaking concerning Christ and His Church." He leaves both His Father and the Heaven of His glory, to be joined to the fallen and broken "members of His body." For their sakes He

will make Himself poor, that He may make them rich. He will go down to the utmost depths to bring them back again to Himself. He will make their falling away from Himself, the opportunity of entering into an inseverable union with them. He and they shall be no more twain.

Well hath Paul said : "This is a great mystery." For the spirit and burden of all prophecy teach us, that Christ, as the Head of mankind, in order to the manifestation of His own fulness, was obliged to cleanse, renew and glorify the human race. Reproving His disciples for the slowness of their faith, He inquires : "*Ought not* Christ to have suffered these things?" Shall I create and not redeem? Shall subtlety and malice be permitted to entice men from Him, and shall He not bring them back again to Himself? Shall His creating Love be confounded and suffer loss? Rather, shall He not lead defeat unto victory, and make the greater need of His children, the occasion of bringing forth His unsearchable riches?

The last
Adam, strictly
the first.

Rom. v. 14.

Hos. ii. 16, 19.

God never presumed upon the adequate headship of Adam; but the very contrary. In His thought and purpose the insufficiency of man was anticipated. Adam never was the true Head of the race; but only a weak "figure of Him Who was to come." "The last Adam" is strictly, "The first and the last." If Eve was presented to Adam as his wife, because she was taken out of him; much more shall Christ present redeemed humanity to Himself, as the outgrowth and upbuilding of His blood. "At that day saith the Lord thou shalt call Me, my Husband, and shalt call Me no more, my Lord. I will betroth thee unto Me for ever." The decreed purpose of God is an absolute intermarriage of the Divine and the human. And it is equally impressive and remarkable, that the book of Revelation closes with a prophetic vision of the final condition of renewed mankind, as an empire city, in the relation of wife to the son of Man : "Come hither," said the angel, to St John, "I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away, in the Spirit, to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God,

and her light most precious," &c., &c., &c. In what way this new empire, in, and under, the Son of God, will serve and glorify God is not revealed. Prophecy lights up the future so far, but no further. But as history dates anew from the Incarnation, we may be sure that the whole completed kingdom of the Incarnation will inaugurate a new beginning for the universe.

Rev. xxi. 9-11.

CHAP. VI. 1-3.—*Children, obey your parents, in the Lord: for this is right. 2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

All vice and crime may be traced to the nursery. The foundations of reverence are either earnestly laid, or perilously sapped, in the very first years. In the first act of disobedience the child commits himself to a downward course. The assertion of self-will in a disobedient act, is evidence enough that the powers of darkness have prevailed to lay the foundation of hell in the young soul. The parents who tolerate, or mildly pass over the disobedience of their children, tolerate what constitutes the beginning of all evil, and the root of eternal evil. The children who are permitted to make light of the authority of their father and mother, will in all probability grow up to make light of the authority of God. In dishonouring their parents, they have already dishonoured God. They have disgraced themselves, impaired their own moral sense, given their consent to evil spirits as their allies, and entered on the way which leads them to destruction.

The root of heaven, or hell, struck in the nursery.

Children should be made to obey long before they can understand *why* they should obey. Their hearts should beat, their muscles grow, and their nerves vibrate and play, under the necessity of obedience. From the beginning, their freedom should be freedom in obedience. As soon as they can understand it, they should be taught that reverence for their parents,

Enforce obedience.

manifested by unhesitating obedience, is God's command. And children who obey their parents because God commands it, are in the straight way wherein they shall not stumble. It shall be "well with them," both for time and eternity. They are in "the Way that they should go,"—the Way that leadeth unto life eternal,—“and when they are old they will not depart from it.” They have begun to do “right.” The foundation of God is in them, and it shall stand for ever, and they shall be built up for ever. “Children, obey your parents, in the Lord, for this is *right*.” It is right, not because it is commanded; but it is commanded because it is right, and it is right because it is essentially good, safe, and prosperous.

The law of
creation
dictates obedi-
ence.

In the law and ordinance of each child's creation, God has made a provision for the reverence of fathers and mothers. Parents are taken into the secrecy of His creative council, that no child may receive his existence immediately from Himself, but from Him, through them. Irreverent and disobedient children, therefore, do violence to the very spring and ground of their own nature; they rupture the covenant which God has made with obedient children; they cut themselves off from all part in His promises; they dissolve their connection with all blessed spirits and angels, and give pledges to Satan. “The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children, *to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.*” All the generations of men are the children of children, and the God-fearing and obedient among them, are links of one chain, of which God is not simply the Beginning, but the secret life and strength of all its links. By disobedience, both children and men drop out of this Divine chain of directly related Fatherhood and childhood, and become not links, but striving, jarring members of democracy and rebellion.

Ps. ciii. 17, 18.

Let no one suppose that the honour due to parents is an obligation which pertains only to childhood and youth. We must never claim exemption from this law of obligation. Reverence for our parents must be an essential element, not

only in our piety, but in our self-respect, as long as we live. If God should permit us the opportunity of repaying them in kind, we should reckon it both our honour and privilege to feed, clothe, protect, and comfort them, as they did us. Nothing offered to God can be acceptable, if it be at the expense of the provision which is due to our parents. How solemnly Christ has rebuked the disgusting affectation of piety, which seeks to excuse its neglect of parents, under the pretence of doing more for God. "Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." You say, We have bound ourselves to give to God that by which we could help our parents. "Thus you have made the commandment of God of none effect through your tradition." Had you honoured your parents, you would have honoured God also; but now you have dishonoured both God and your parents. To neglect our clear obligations towards those who are near at hand, in favour of our imaginary obligations towards those who are distant, is great impiety. Nothing can make men more hateful in the sight of God, than to prescribe a religious course for themselves, while at the same time they pass over what He has directly commanded.

Mark vii. 6.

Matt. xv. 6.

God has bound Himself by a special promise to take care of reverent and obedient children, who obey Him by honouring their own parents. From the right, the good can never be dissevered. In a wrong course, you cannot be saved from becoming the prey of evil. In every generation, numbers sow the seed of future disaster and wretchedness by their disobedience to their parents. Many an untimely grave has the same account to give of the young victim of disease and death. Children, who are unruly at home, will be vicious and disorderly abroad. Every self-willed child is preparing a scourge for himself, and much mischief for others. Stubbornness under a parent's roof will be followed by irregularities, late hours, evil companions, and secret vice. Perverse children are making haste to overtake their own dishonour and confusion.

God's prescription for the children's good.

"Honour thy father and thy mother *as the Lord thy God*" Deut. v. 16.

hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee." Sons and daughters, while you are yet only at the threshold of your existence, hear it, that God wishes it to go well with you, both in this world, and for ever; and has bound Himself to take care of you and to bless you, on one condition, that you honour and obey your parents. You cannot quote the numbers of obedient children, who are removed from the world, by early death, as making exceptions to God's promise. For with these, specially, it is well in the land which the Lord God has given to them; yea, and it shall be well with them, and of their days there shall be no end. The Spirit of their piety is no other than the Spirit of Jesus. They are beloved children of their Heavenly Father. Under His life-giving, joy-giving countenance, they live together in gladness with all the holy angels. Disobedient children have already disowned Jesus Christ, and cast out His Spirit from their souls. "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear to my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh." "My son, keep thy father's commandments, and forsake not the law of thy mother. Bind them continually upon thy heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee."

Prov. iv.
20-22.

Prov. vi.
20-22.

The loving authority of wise parents represents the authority of God and heaven. In the highest and most sacred sense of the words, God is our Father, and Heaven our mother. When parents fear and love God, their home-government is as the throne of God in their house. They rule, as God does, not from the love of ruling, but for the good of their children. On the other hand, the reverence and obedience of the children are the first blossom of a heavenly piety. They are the great Father's seedling angels forming in the shell of their mortal bodies.

"Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise." "Our Father which art in heaven,"

in a far stricter, profounder sense, than we are either our own, or our father's and mother's, we are Thine. We live in Thy house, we sit at Thy table. In every day's enjoyments, we see Thy hand and Thy heart. Our possessions are Thy goods. All our hopes are in Thy keeping.

And heaven, like a dear mother, watches over us, waits upon us, and carries us in her bosom. She fulfils both an invisible, and a visible ministry towards us,—invisible in the angels, and visible in the Church. As the soul in the body, so is heaven in the congregation of believing, loving hearts. The Church should be honoured not only for Heaven's sake, but for the Lord's sake. Streams of life, direct from our Heavenly Father through the heart of Jesus Christ, flow through every assembly of believers for the refreshment of every child of God.

Motherliness
of Heaven,

In earliest infancy, before you knew either father or mother, the Church received you into her open arms, she gave God thanks for you, named you, and prayed that you may not be lost in the sin and error of the world, but that after your pilgrimage is over, you may come safely home to the bosom of God and Heaven. She prays for you still, and will continue her sacred and loving services on your behalf all the days of your life. She provides for you your most peaceful and heavenly home. With all her imperfections, she seeks your highest good. "God is in the midst of her." Grieve her not. The meek and loving light of her wisdom, is light from Christ, and the light of your dearest life. She has never wronged you. If you turn your back on her she grieves, but forgives you; and when you are wise enough to return to her, she receives you as a mother, without upbraiding you. She keeps her pure affections for you, but will not be meddlesome, or force her ministries upon you. She confesses your sin, and desires to be a channel of mercy and healing to your soul. On this side the grave, no mother is like her for dignity and grace, for counsel and tenderness. On the other side of death, she appears in her glory, and as your mother in God, welcomes you to her everlasting habitation.

—and the
Church.

There will be many distinct joys in heaven on the day of your entrance. Your Saviour will have His joy. Your guardian-angels will have their joy. Your fellow-members in Church fellowship, who are there before you, will have their joy. But, next to your Saviour, none in heaven will more humbly rejoice before God to see you there, than those who on earth were your parents after the flesh.

CHAP. VI. 4.—*And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.*

The wrathful
element.

There is in all things, and in all souls, an element which should rather be allayed than stirred up. It is well that the force is there, for the feeding and enlivening of all the powers. Latent and under command, it is invaluable; but when it assumes authority, and mounts into self-manifestation, it is harmful and destructive. Parents, therefore, must carefully abstain from provoking the evil element, which is in their children. Shew them by your own example, how the wrathful power can be made subservient to their energy and cheerfulness, and at the same time kept under perfect control. When, instead of possessing your soul in patience, you lose yourselves in a ferment of excitement, you suffer a serious loss of dignity in the eyes of your children. The force of your authority is gone. How can children honour from the heart, that which is destitute of honour? How can they reverence you, if you lose your majesty? God calls you to the high and blessed office of representing Him and heaven, to your children.

The Jesus-
element.

There is in your children not only the wrathful element from you, but also a spirit of great sweetness from their Heavenly Father. The Jesus-Spirit is God's seed, and it is sown in all the race. No child of Adam is wholly the seed of the serpent: "the seed of the woman" is in every man that cometh into the world. "The manifestation of the Spirit is

given to every man to profit withal." The Jesus-Spirit is the essential Spirit of humanity, without which, salvation were an impossibility. Parents and teachers, address yourselves to this divine ground in your children. There is a spirit in them which will help with you, in all your measures for their good, if you are only wise enough to secure its co-operation. So live with your children, and so appeal to them, and so correct them, as to call forth the Spirit of Jesus which is in them. In all your counsels and reproofs, presume that the right Spirit, the Spirit of "the Holy Child" is in their breast. Help your children to recognise in themselves this Helpful Spirit. When they manifest the contrary spirit, teach them the art of checking and conquering their evil spirit by the Spirit of Jesus, which is quite as much in them as the evil spirit. Teach them that by allowing the evil spirit to have the upper hand, they silence, and positively wound, their own good spirit, which they have from Jesus. Whether active or not, this Spirit is in every child waiting to be quickened and called forth. Be encouraged, the Enlightener, the Convincer, the Saviour of your children is in them. He is very "nigh unto them, in their mouth and in their heart, that they may be saved."

Consider well the law of heavenly growth. Flowers, grapes, corn, fruit, and souls unfold, grow, and perfect their forms under analogous influences. Storms destroy, but never produce, either bud or bloom. Stir not up wrath in your children. A mischief may be done in five minutes which many years will not repair. Under a haughty or harsh government, the flowers of life will not unfold. By false methods of parental authority, parents often quench genius, and suppress all candour and openness in their children. "Consider the lilies, how they grow;" and provide mild and genial weather for your household plants.

Cherish the belief that your children may be divinely nourished long before their understandings are developed. There is an invaluable formative influence which operates independently of the understanding. Witness corn, fruit,

1 Cor. xii. 7.

Law of
heavenly
growth.

Much to be
done before
reason shows
itself.

flowers: witness also your own babes. They are marvellously, but delicately, impressible, and very subject to the atmosphere of the house. Not only their nerves, but also their souls are bent and inclined by the spirit and temper of their parents and nurses. Before they can understand a word that you say, you have sown the invisible seed of your daily life into the tender ground of their spirits. Let your babes live, and breathe, and smile, and grow, in the sunny atmosphere of your own heavenliness. By your own peaceful, loving, beautiful life, let their will form under a Jesus-ward bias, before they know His Name. Nourish their affections with His sweetness, and thus secure their reason before it comes. It is easier to bring them up in the love and safe-keeping of Jesus Christ, than to win them back to Him, after they have fallen a prey to the appetites and reasonings of the flesh. If the life of Christ be really in you, no one in your house will be able to escape its Divine radiations. The promise of God is to you and to your children. Unless they wilfully put themselves out of His covenant, God regards your children as making one organic whole with yourselves. In giving vital heat to the parent-bird, He gives it at the same time to her brood. Ultimately, He gives the young ones life independently of their parents; but at first He gives it through them. No one surely will affirm that the life of Jesus is less diffusive than animal heat. The grace of God in the parents is nothing less than God Himself living and operating in their house. His promise is not in word only: it is spirit and life, it is an active permeating power. Paul traces Timothy's piety to a parental root: "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, *which dwelt first in thy grandmother, then in thy mother*; and I am persuaded in thee also."

2 Tim. i. 5.

Christian parents, your children are even more the Lord's than they are yours. Regard them as His, and your love to them will be more sacred, and your counsel more influential. Believe, that the righteousness, peace, and gladness, which you have from the Lord, will be nurture and dis-

cipline for them ; that His virtues, reflected in your character and temper, are charmed powers, continually acting on them. Your house is an earthly heaven, strictly joined, and in communication, with God's holy heaven. Chill not the Spirit of Love in your house by doubt. Cease not to pray for your children, but honour your Heavenly Father with your confidence. Believe that every one who has been brought up within the circle of your affections in Christ, will be a member with you of God's eternal House.

¹ CHAP. VI. 5-8.—*Servants, be obedient to them who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ ; 6 Not with eye service as men-pleasers ; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; 7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men : 8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

It is a relief to one's human sympathies to know that, great as are the distinctions between men and men, they all have equally one God and Father, one Saviour and Judge. Some are in authority, and some are under subjection ; but because one Just Judge rules over all, the way to the highest distinctions is quite as open to subordinates as to their superiors. The distinctions of the present world are for the most part very unreal, and always of brief duration. Paul prays Philemon to receive back his old servant Onesimus, "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved." He goes even further, "If thou count me a partner, receive him as myself." The only real and abiding ground of distinction which any master, or prince, can have, is to be made a partaker of the essential excellence of Christ, the true Son of God. But his lowest menial may quite as readily obtain this new nature. And if the servant embodies in his life more of Jesus Christ

All men have
one Father,
&c.

Phil. xvi. 17.

than his master, then in the world to come, and before God, he will rank higher, and inherit superior distinctions.

The judgment of eternity is not to be assumed in this life.

Because the grades of society in this life are only temporary, servants are not permitted, therefore, to set them at naught. True, your masters are in no spiritual or real sense, your masters; but only, as the apostle says, "according to the flesh." Nevertheless, present distinctions are agreeable to the will and ordinance of God, for this life.

Force of "fear and trembling."

The "fear and trembling," commended to servants, evidently mean reverential earnestness of purpose, as knowing how much is involved in present faithfulness. The same words are used to express the hearty reception which the Corinthians gave to Titus. "We joyed for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all; . . . and his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembers the obedience of you all, how with *fear and trembling* you received him." It is clear, therefore, that we must not understand by fear and trembling either servility or nervous excitement; but rather the absence of all agitation, in a religious intensity of spirit. We are exhorted to co-operate with God in working out our own salvation, in the same spirit. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." An earnest godly fear and great peace of mind are not only compatible, but mutually helpful to each other.

2 Cor. vii. 13-15.

Phil. ii. 12.

A remedy against servility and hypocrisy.

By such a spirit, servants, would be effectually delivered from the slavery and hypocrisy of "eye-service." Mere men-pleasers are not only in constant bondage, but they have neither self-respect nor the approbation of God. Whereas those who in singleness of heart fulfil their obligations, "as to the Lord, and not to men," do their work in great freedom of spirit, enjoy self-respect, and lay up for themselves honours in Heaven.

Our future standing in eternity depends very much on our faithfulness to the relations of time. It can be no lasting disadvantage to servants to have hard and haughty masters; but real loss and damage will accrue to such servants if they serve them not faithfully, and in the spirit of the Lord Jesus. Con-

scientiousness, in the little every-day things of earthly service, is sowing the seed of a great reward. In eternity, where true judgment takes effect, we shall discover that our Lord's words have a most weighty meaning. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." "Because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If, therefore, you have not been faithful in the unrighteous riches, who will commit to your trust the true? And if you have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" If these words teach anything, they declare that subordinates, by unfaithfulness to the possessions and interests of others, are adopting a course which will deprive them of that which might be their own; and that unfaithfulness in the monetary transactions of time will tell upon one's possession of "true riches" in eternity. Moreover, we are instructed that the "few things" in which we are occupied now, have a distinct bearing on our loss, or obtainment of "many things" hereafter. What many persons have to do from day to day may appear to be "very little," but faithfulness therein is the direct path to rank and authority in the world to come.

Paul, therefore, counsels all servants and employés to remember, that their earthly service is a discipline preparatory to eternal recompense. Whether your masters and employers are what they should be to you or not, endeavour to serve them as though you were serving Christ. "Whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." "With good will doing service," "not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." The Lord will repay you. "Whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Every exercise of good-will, every hour's faithful service, every instance of silent subjection, shall come back to you. Your labour and diligence, in the employ of your fellow creatures, when rendered "not with eye-service, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will

The spirit of present service a rule of future judgment.

Matt. xxv. 21.

Luke xix. 17.

Luke xvi. 10-12.

Col. iii. 23.

1 Pet. ii. 18.

of God from the heart," are literally so much heavenly capital in your Lord's hands.

CHAP. VI. 9.—*And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening : knowing that both your and their master is in heaven ; neither is there respect of persons with Him.*

Masters have
no advantage
before God.

If there is no respect of persons with God, masters, beyond this world, can have no advantage over their servants. If the master, be more Christ-like and faithful than his servant, (which is often the case), he shall have a superior reward ; but if the servant be more Christ-like and faithful than his master, which also is often the case, then in the world where true judgment takes effect, he shall rank above his master. Masters are no nearer to the final human distinctions because they are masters ; nor are servants farther off from them, because they are servants. But the faithfulness of both is so much treasure laid up for them in heaven. "The same shall they receive of the Lord, whether they be bond or free." "The day of God" is an admirably impartial day. Right judgment prevails at last.

A delusion.

If we suppose that the piety of masters and mistresses is of one kind, and that of servants another kind, we have fallen into a delusion. Having exhorted servants to do their duty from the heart, as to the Lord, Paul immediately writes : "And ye masters do the same to them." If they are under obligation to serve you, you are no less under obligation to serve them. Let their benefit, in your service, be a stronger desire with you, than your own benefit from their service. They and you have one Judge. Forego your own advantage if you can promote their interests thereby. "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Acts xx. 35.

Be masters "with fear and trembling," regarding your servants with a religious concern, in singleness of heart, doing

the will of God towards them. The Lord, Who is the Pattern-Master came into the world, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. "I am among you as one that serveth." Honour your servants for the Lord's sake. Whatsoever good thing you do them, the same shall you receive of the Lord.

Beware of harshness, "forbear threatening:" why should you treasure up wrath against yourself? What you are to others, will qualify what God is to you. The life which you live in the body is the seed of your life after death. "God giveth to every seed its own body." Thistle seed has its resurrection, but always in a thistle's body. "With the merciful man, Thou wilt shew Thyself merciful: with the upright man Thou wilt shew Thyself upright: and with the froward, Thou wilt shew Thyself froward." No man can escape from the spirit of his own life. Nor can any man receive God into any other spirit than his own spirit. Therefore as is the man, such is God to the man. A rigorous man will meet with rigour. Our Lord says, an unforgiving man will be delivered to the tormentors, until he has paid the uttermost farthing of his obligations to God. "With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." If you desire God not to enter into judgment with you, you are thereby bound not to enter into judgment with a fellow creature. To expect the mercy from God which you do not shew to others is to be a "wicked servant." If you desire God to be merciful to you, you should not be satisfied on your part, in being merely an upright man. Sow loving-kindnesses and mercies bountifully, and you shall reap the same bountifully.

As you sow,
you will reap.

1 Cor. xv. 58.

Psalms xviii.
25, 26.

Matt. vii. 2.

CHAP. VI. 10-13.—*Finally, my brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil. 12 Because our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the World-*

Rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual powers of evil in the heaventlies. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having accomplished all, to stand.

The only permanent relation is our Divine family-relation in the Son of God. Wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, and masters are therefore “finally” included under one term. They are all “brethren.” We are one body in Christ Jesus, with a perfectly mutual interest in each other. We are, and shall be, very various, because His riches are unsearchable. We are one, because He is One. He is our breath of life, and the Potentiality of all our powers. What the atmosphere, and the power of its might, are to our mortal bodies, the Lord’s Presence, and the power of His might, are to us.

Change of air.

We go forth from the limits of our private houses, into the freedom and freshness of unimprisoned air: we leave the effete atmosphere of our cities in favour of the sea-shore and the mountain range; and why should we not, for the health of our higher nature, go up from the tame level of our ordinary thoughts and passions, to inhale spirit and life from the expanse which our Lord fills with the strengthening calm of His own intense life? That air is our true, eternal breath of Life. It is Life itself, Power itself. By all means, acquire the art and the habit of inbreathing it, that you may be tranquil and strong in the Power of its might. As many as in-breathe it, inbreathe the might of Christ’s ascension,—the power which makes them sons of God. In no other way can any of us be made “partakers of the Divine Nature.” The power of God is organised in Christ, that from Him, as from a Man, it may be an adapted strength for all men. “He breathed upon them, and saith, Receive ye the Holy Spirit.” This is a new form of power, dating from Christ’s completed glorification and oneness with God. Believers, you have the form of Christian godliness, seek the power. Draw it into your inner man, till you are charged and clothed therewith. Seek to know in yourselves the force of the words, “Put ye on the

John xx. 22.

Lord Jesus Christ." The age in which God said He would pour out His Spirit is fully come. The Spirit of the Almighty Man is poured out, were there only vessels to receive it. There are vessels, but they are occupied. "Bring empty vessels," saith the Spirit; but men have not the heart to pour out the old, that they may be filled with the new spirit of human life in Christ Jesus. What can the Lord do, but wait? What can His mercy do but awaken judgment against the earth-filled vessels that they may be prepared to be Heaven-filled? There are some witnesses among us, who, having been emptied, are tranquillised, strengthened, assured, they know not how. Under sorrow and a great pressure of affliction, they longed for Jesus, longed to be bathed in His Spirit; but they knew not that all that while, they were inbreathing Christ. The trees breathe noiselessly, and know not what they do; but they put on wondrous power, and store within them great treasures of light. So "the trees of the Lord."

The might,

The inner man being brought into accordant relations with the whole heavenly world, and with the outgoings of the Divine Man, becomes established in "the perfect law of liberty," called also "the full assurance of faith," and "the Joy of the Lord." Great rest, passing understanding, fills the heart.

and the freedom, of Christ.

Nothing short of being strengthened and encompassed by a superhuman power could give us peace, seeing that we have a superhuman enemy. But we now approach a subject that labours under serious difficulty. Few men will patiently hear that there are hosts of spirits, and spirits of a very high order, who are ceaselessly plotting and working against both God and men. Nothing is more clearly revealed than the fact that there are vast armies of intelligent powers, with which God and heaven are at war. And yet the whole subject is commonly regarded as dubious, or met with positive unbelief. It gives great offence to the understanding. And though the condition of nature and the whole history of the human race support the testimony of the Bible, men withhold their faith, and prefer to think that the rebellion of angels is a thing of

A repulsive subject.

The "evil
day."

the imagination. To have to treat, therefore, not of a fallen, invisible world, nor of fallen men, but of a fallen heaven of Princes and Rulers, with all their multitudes, is a trial to a teacher. Directly associated with this unbelief is another very general repugnance, namely, that the lifetime of men in the present world is their "evil day." They are unwilling to think that an orderly course of things which is so adapted and alluring to their senses and their hearts, can be at variance with their true interests. That invisible powers are seeking to unfit them for a life in heaven, and thus to ruin them, by the attraction and influence of the things which are seen, they will not believe. And of course they do not suspect that their unbelief is a proof of the exceeding subtlety and complete success of the enemy.

But it is just because the sphere of our world swarms with crafty intellects, who know how to ingratiate themselves equally with our reason and our inclinations, that Paul affirms the period of our mortal life to be our "evil day." The reasoning of these powers is conclusive to the natural mind. It is the plausible, treacherous soul-light of which our Lord warns us. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." In that light, which is a wonder of great darkness, evil spirits are welcomed to the house of the soul as bosom friends. "*That darkness!*" The glow of our emotions is often not heaven's fire; but implacably hostile to heaven's fire. The energy of our passions is less frequently from Jesus, than from the enemy of Jesus. At the very time that we are most completely led captive by the evil one, we suspect no other will than our own. Birds cautiously fly about the fowler's corn, and fish are wary of the tempting bait; but human souls positively rush into the snares of their fowler.

Our holiday
not yet.

Human life under the sun is no holiday. Although the wily ones, who are seeking to make us their prey, do their best to bury every worthy view of life in an elysium of forgetfulness. Hence, everywhere, the swift succession of excitements and pastimes. Hence the multitude of panderers to

low appetites. Hence the race-course, the pantomime, the opera, and the endless supply of literary fiction. Even the Church and the pulpit often labour under an intense strain to provide a change of sensationalism for the people,—something to call them away from themselves, rather than to lead them into themselves. Countless spirits fill the air of our world, and persuade men that they are on no ground of danger or warfare, but in a paradise of delights for the gratification of the senses and appetites. Rather than in God's Bible, most men prefer to believe in the reasonings and enticements of these spirits of the air. Willingly they abandon themselves to immediate pleasure, lose the battle, and die, to find out in what relation those stand to God's heaven, to whom time on earth was a holiday.

Let as many as desire to come to the true human rest and feast of eternity, beware of Satan's cheap, immediate substitute. He and his multitudes, having lost their divine freedom, are seeking, by the shows and pleasures of time, to divert mankind, that they may not, by spiritual conquest, win what they themselves have lost.

Men are no match, young and inexperienced as they are, for the Principalities and World-Rulers, who reason so speciously in their fleshly mind, and so pleasantly allure the fleshly soul. In themselves, these tempting spirits have no rest, but they find some assuagement of their sharp fire in the souls of men. They are not only our enemies from malice, but from self-love. No prayers of men for deliverance from evil spirits, are more sincere than the prayers of the said spirits, that they may not be dissociated from men. "Let us alone." They are not afraid that man, if left to himself, would ever be able to dissolve his connection with them. They know that it is neither in his power, nor in his will to send them away from him. He loves his own fallen nature too much.

The great art of these invisible world-rulers consists in never seeming to be against us. They conceal themselves in our affections, and plead for our wishes. And, as though from quite a motherly consideration for our weakness, and a

The depth

warm concern for our enjoyment, they make it appear that the claims of God are unreasonable, and that the way to heaven is cold and forbidding. Seated in the warmth of our hearts, they reason warmly for our pleasure, and then flatter us that we reason well. We are taken by the "wiles," we suck in the flattering honey, and know not that we are being poisoned unto the second death. These spirits are too much for us. Their strongholds are in our hearts. Before we can successfully oppose those who clothed themselves with the armour of our own life, we must put on "the armour of God." Jesus is the only man who ever prevailed in this war. He came to the encounter, not in nature's heats, nor with nature's reasonings; but clothed with truth and purity, guilelessness and perfect love. We must "put on Christ." Through the innocence of Jesus in them, the little ones of heaven, are clothed with invincible armour and always behold the face of the Father. They put forth no power. They do but rest in the meek joyousness of their existence. Yet the whole power of the enemy is still and helpless before them. Their very nature is armour-proof. Christ's radiant shield, from His life within them, plays round about them.

This "armour of God" will not oppress us. Rather, by a fulness of inward strength, it will relieve us of our own weight. Put it on, that the enemy may find not you, but God in you.

The host of
the enemy.

Imagine no vulgar emperor with vulgar forces, but a Spirit-Emperor of spirit-emperors,—the Chief of Principalities and Powers, each of which reigns like a sovereign over his kingdom of fallen angels. They are World-Rulers, deceiving the whole world, and ceaselessly striving for ascendancy over the hearts and reason of men. There are no human souls which are not more or less subject to their influence. Their "rule, authority, and power" run throughout nature, and into the highest and most spiritual realms of human thought. They can be more spiritual than the severest ascetic, and more refined than the purest mystic. No saint ever enters into his closet, or stands before the altar of God, but Satan is already there to resist him. The Son of God cannot come in the flesh without being assailed by him.

Most persons have a real idea of the armies of Europe; but a very weak and uninfluential conception of the legions of God's adversary. Yet I suppose a thousand Europes would make no approach to the numbers comprehended under the principalities and powers which abound in the aerial deep, and allure, or darken and oppress, all souls. A legion is often associated with a single man. Indeed, it would be perfectly absurd to suppose that Europe multiplied a thousand, or ten thousand times, could play the part in the universe of an adversary of God. The power and dominion of evil and death are hidden from us, as equally beyond our belief and comprehension.

To meet this enemy in actual combat, was one of the grand ends of the Incarnation. The beloved disciple attaches supreme importance to the confession, that "the Son of God is come in the flesh." If He be not come in the flesh, then the hosts of invisible "world-rulers," whose seat and empire are the carnal mind and the carnal heart, are unconquered to this day, and our salvation is a dream. If He has not actually encountered them in our nature, and spoiled all their "principalities and powers, triumphing over them in it," then "the tried stone, the precious corner-stone, the sure foundation" of our hope, is not yet laid. The whole superstructure of our faith falls, if "the True God and the Eternal Life" has not worn our very flesh, and met and overcome the spirits and powers who are in league with it. Therefore John asserts that no spirit is of God who does not confess that His Only Begotten Son has tabernacled in our flesh. "This is a deceiver and an antichrist," he repeats. There remains, in the whole universe of spirits, no haughty, self-willed power which the Son of God, as man, has not made subject to Himself. "In that He put all in subjection under Him, *He left nothing that is not put under Him.*" In a spirit with which they had nothing in common, and by an art beyond their art, He vanquished "gods many and lords many," and won a throne in their own heavenlies, above them all, and over them all, in which throne He will reign "till He shall have put down," in

One greater than all flesh, and the spirits thereof, is come in the flesh.

1 John iv. 2,
2 John 7.

Heb. ii. 8.

man, in creature, and in nature, their entire "rule and authority and power." "Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The Universal Power, therefore, which is present, and moveth in all being, will see to it, that every spirit shall bow to Jesus, and every tongue confess His Supreme Lordship. On no other basis, nor through any other medium than that of Jesus, is the Father's glory possible.

Put on the
supreme
Power.

The Spirit and Power of the victorious, ascended Manhood of Christ are the "armour of God" for us men. It is a Power above all power, Divine Power, and yet strictly human. Whoso putteth on Christ, putteth on armour which is God's clothing, and inseparable from God. In it, no weakest one can fail: without it, no mightiest one can stand.

What hosts of kings, emperors, and ruling world-intellec-
 Rev. xvi. 14. tuals, find themselves, after death, in no other heavenlies than those
 of the fallen angels; and helpless miserable dwarflings they
 Rev. xvii. 14. are, in the presence of the old apostate "thrones and
 dominions." Read Isa. xiv., Ezek. xxxi., xxxii. In the book
 of Revelation it is said: "The spirits of devils go forth unto
 the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them
 to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." "These
 shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome
 them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they
 John viii. 23. that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Two
 camps will ultimately divide the world: namely, those who
 are in Christ, and those who are in the spirit of the world.
 "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this
 world; I am not of this world." These two camps will ulti-
 mately come into direct collision; and the whole world will
 see in which camp God moveth. "The Lord shall utter His
 Joel ii. 11. voice before His army: for His camp is very great; for
 strong is He that executeth His word: for great is the Day
 of the Lord, and very terrible; and who can abide it?"
 "Satan" and "the nations" "went up on the breadth of the
 earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the
 Rev. xx. 9. beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven,
 and devoured them." The men and women who are in Christ

will inevitably grow into such unity with Him, as "the King of glory," that they will be direct channels for the fire of God. Understand no arbitrary fire, nor any other fire than the irresistible element of God and Heaven's life, in man.

Let all those who are "with Christ," consider well their distinction, and take heed to themselves. The battle of God and the universe is one of spirits. If possible, your affections will be allured from your supreme and unchangeable good, to a mere shadow of good, which is only related to the busy day of your mortal life: the object of which is to fascinate you by its pleasures, until you are unfitted for the eternal joy, and formed for the incurable sorrow. And unless you enjoy the sole defence of being "light in the Lord," your understanding will unavoidably be "taken captive," by some one plausible phase of the great misleading scheme of thought. Enquire earnestly, whether your thought and reasoning correspond with the shell, and temporal form of things? or with the abiding reality of things, namely the eternal things of God. "Meats for the body, and the body for meats; but God shall destroy both *it* and *them*." "But I will not be brought under the power of any." "It;" "them;" "I." How grandly this man asserts the distinction of his personality over the shadowy "it," namely, his body; and also over the "them," namely, the "all things" related to that shadow. God, by a fixed, irreversible law, destroys, breaks up, both "it" and "them;" but "*I*" am eternal. Let me then take heed that "*I*," in my eternal heart and mind, am related to the eternally good and eternally true, as the shadowy "it," is related to the shadowy "them." Just because our hearts are exposed to the influences, and our minds, to the logic and sophistries, of the great fallen spirits, who are seeking, by the spell and enchantment of things temporal, to overmaster and hold our eternal souls, the present is our "evil day."

The bewitching power of "the evil day."

1 Cor. vi.
12, 13.

There is one Power, and one only, Which can deliver us. Let our eyes and our desires lay hold of the Man Who has overcome all things; until His throne of "True Light" being established in us, shall clothe the whole inner man with

invincible armour. Then exceedingly exultant in the settled harmony between our eternal personality and our eternal good, the heart will sing : " Jehovah is my Light and my salvation ! whom shall I fear ? Jehovah is the Strength of my life ! of whom shall I be afraid ? " There are deeper, higher, greater reasons than are ever told us, and greater than ever can be told us, why we must be confederate with the Son of God, in order to be saved from the wrath which is coming. The opportunity given to us, of receiving Christ, and of being in Him, is one of infinite grace and promise.

Psa. xxvii. 1.

CHAP. VI. 14-17.—*Stand, therefore, having girt your loins about with Truth, and having put on the breast-plate of Righteousness: 15 And having shod your feet with the preparedness of the Gospel of Peace; 16 In addition to all, taking the shield of Faith, wherewith you shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked One; 17 And take the helmet of Salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.*

Having commended to us "the whole armour of God," the apostle becomes more specific, and presents to us the armour in detail. We must take heed that we are not misled by the imagery. Our subject is armour for our spirits; and armour for the spirit is spirit-armour. In a word, It is God. "Take unto you the whole armour of God." We are spirit-men on our way to God; but clouds of spirit-powers encompass us, who will, if possible, decoy us into side-paths, and disqualify us to be received up into heaven. We have already aimed to shew that these spirits are not weak and contemptible, but intellectually acute and powerful. In original powers, they are equal to the highest principalities of heaven. There are no heavens of thought and experience accessible to man, while he is in the body, which these fallen angels are not able to invade. One of these, in logical dispute with Michael, the archangel, maintained his ground to the end. Michael

Spirit-armour.

seems finally to have cut short the dispute, by saying, "The Lord rebuke thee," It should help our conceptions of the rank and ability of these spirits, that they hesitated not to meet our Lord in conference, to assail His mind with a lengthened argumentative appeal, and to allure His affections by "glory." It is certain, therefore, that we have no powers adequate to the encounter with these fallen sons of God. Of himself, no man is able to distinguish between their mind in him, and his own mind, or between the motion of their fire in his affections, and his own affections. With good reason, Paul exhorts us not simply to put on spirit-armour, but *Divine* armour. If they find no other light in us than our own reason, they always prevail. If our spirituality be our own, it will fall before them. If we are to stand against them, they must find not us, but Christ in us. Our armour must be proved. It must be armour which has wholly prevailed, armour in which man has already passed through and beyond death, and all the lands, visible and invisible of corruption, it must be armour in which man has already gone up, and appeared before God, with acceptance. Such is the armour with which Christ clothes our spirits. It is God-proof armour. Paul meant to the full, all that His words express when he wrote: "My brethren, be strong *in the Lord, and in the Power of His might.*"

In describing this armour of God, he assigns the first place to the girdle. *"Stand, having girt your loins about with Truth."* The girdle not only gathers together and holds up what is loose, but braces up the man. Being firmly girt about his loins, a man is twice a man. Every soldier in the British army knows this. With his belt on, he stands more firmly on the ground, has a freer use of his arms, and, on the strength of his girdle, is able to throw the force of his whole body against the enemy.

Even so the Christian must see that the Truth of God sits firmly about his inner man. He must tolerate no loose thoughts, no wandering affections. He must gather up all the powers of his soul into unity, and be girt about with

eternal strength. To begin with, to the True God, he must be a true man. In becoming a disciple of Christ, he must be absolutely sincere. He must embrace the religion of the New Testament, not on mere authority, but because, independently of its being written, it is the Truth about God, about man, and about all things. His discipleship must be no half measure. It should not be first of all for his salvation, and then for the Truth's sake; but first of all for Truth's sake, and then for his salvation by Truth. Christ is Truth. Only "the True God" can save man. For in what does the salvation of man consist, but the saving of his spirit from every species of untruth, delusion, and evil? A true Christian is a man whose fixed intendment and resolve are on the side of Truth. This man, God's Truth will defend, by sitting close about his mind, by facing the enemy on all sides, and by infusing strength into him. In such an one there can be no wavering. He suffers not his passions to dangle about his feet, nor to float capriciously in the wind. His purpose is one, and fixed. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." A man may have "truth in his inward parts," and great singleness of purpose, and yet be a very imperfect man. He may be sharp and hasty in temper, or narrow in spirit, and harsh in his judgments, and yet be whole-hearted and fixed in his resolve.

James i. 6-8.

His noble sincerity and the power of God's Truth, make a one. "A just man falleth seven times and riseth again; for the Lord upholdeth him with His hand." He is girt about, not with his own truth, nor this planet's truth, but the Truth which is "settled for ever in Heaven." Might runs through him from the everlasting God, as the law of gravitation runs through the earth, holding it, winter and summer, and night and day, in its orbit. "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall arise: when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a Light unto me." "Though an army should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise

Micah vii. 8.

against me, in this I will be confident. Jehovah is the strength of my life : of whom shall I be afraid ?”

Ps. xxvii. 1-3.

The girdle gives strength, the breastplate covers and defends all the vital powers. But whatever distinction there may be between a soldier's belt and his breastplate, in this Divine suit of armour there is perfect unity. “The whole armour of God” is one throughout. For example, the Truth of God entering into a man's heart and mind, and becoming one with his inmost life, appears in his character and conduct as righteousness. He is not only strong in the Lord, but in what he has personally become, “through the Truth,” he is right before God. Nothing can imperil his safety. “Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good.” “Behold,” saith the Lord, “I give you power over all the power of the enemy ; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

The breast-plate.

1 Pet. iii. 13.

Luke x. 19.

Practical righteousness is the evidence which the Christian presents to the world, that Christ, the Truth of God, is a life in his soul. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” By their spotless honour and integrity, all those who name the Name of Christ should compel the world to think highly of God. If believers have not the habits and character of God's children, it is right that they should be suspected of not being His true children. The New Testament does not speak doubtfully as to what manner of persons the sons of God are. “That ye be blameless and guileless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation ; among whom shine ye as lights in the world.”

Matt. v. 16.

Phil. ii. 15.

“The righteousness which is of faith” is double. Within, it has an aspect towards God ; without, it has an aspect towards men. It is an inward spirit, with an outward face. Because it is inherent and essential righteousness, it is under a Divine necessity of embodying itself in practical righteousness before the world.

And comparing Scripture with Scripture, we shall find that, this is precisely the view given of the Christian's breastplate.

Compare
1 Thess. v. 8.
Eph. vi. 14

In writing to the Thessalonians, Paul exhorts them to put on "the breastplate of faith and love;" while in this epistle, he commends to believers "the breastplate of righteousness." Now "the breastplate of faith and love," and "the breastplate of righteousness" are not two, but one and the same. Every breastplate has two sides. The inside looks inwards and is a secret to the world; the outside faces the world, and is visible to every one. Outwardly it is practical righteousness; but inwardly it is "faith and love." Faith and love are vital principles, the lights of the soul, known only to God and the believer himself; but from these proceed all the beauty and excellency of his character. As in nature, light works by heat to clothe the earth with beauty; even so "faith worketh by love," and clothes the believer with righteousness. Christ *in* the man, makes a Christ-like man in the world. The light of faith, working by the hidden fire of holy love, embodies itself in a God-glorifying life. According to Peter, those who have both the indwelling grace and the outshining evidence, make their "calling and election sure." They "shall never fall." "Entrance shall be ministered to them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

2 Pet. i. 10-11.
The "feet
shod."

"The whole armour of God" includes armour for the feet. Christianity undervalues nothing that is human. Christ is Christianity. He has laid anew the basis of our nature. "Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb." He clothed Himself thence, with our flesh and blood, and came step by step into the world. Step by step, He overcame the world; death; Hades; and, step by step, He surpassed, in the qualities and completeness of His human nature, all the heavens. Therefore, Christianity is completed Humanity; and completed Humanity includes the circuit of all things visible and invisible. Christ is both the Head and the Feet of our race. To put on Christ is to put on the ends of creation. Only the highest virtues can qualify a man for the lowest service. To inbreathe the Spirit of Christ, is to inbreathe the spirit of all things. To "win Christ and be found in Him," is to win, and embody, the grandest possible unity.

True Christianity leaves nothing in man ungraced. His soul becomes a charmed house, and an attraction to angels; his body puts on a new dignity; his face beams with new goodness and intelligence; his very feet, or goings, are beautiful. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace; and bring tidings of good things." The prophet, from whom Paul quotes these words, wrote, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet," &c. &c. In spirit, he saw the figure of Christ, and after Him, of Christed man, moving hither and thither, in the highest sphere of human thought, but full of all goodness and humility, the blessings of peace and goodwill accompanying him, and raying out from his presence. The prophet was full of joy at his vision, and exclaimed, "How beautiful on the mountains, are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!"

Rom. x. 15.

Isa. lii. 7.

Christianity always lifts a man above the previous level of his life. He is man gone up on the mountains. He is nearer heaven, he is at peace with God, he is full of love to all the world. He is a blessed man, and longs to bless others. The sun of heaven glows in his soul, and spreads wide and far. "Glory to God in the highest" goes up from him; and out from him, peace and good will towards every creature. He is always in readiness for all beautiful living, and good doing. The Lord's goings are in his goings. His feet are shod with a Divine preparedness. For success in the ways of worldly covetousness, and equally for the stratagems and contentions of party-zeal, he is altogether unfitted. But for whatsoever is pure, lovely, good, and merciful, he is in readiness. Christ liveth in him. He is shod therefore,—ready to do whatever the Gospel of Love and Peace can do, to bless mankind. The Divine anointing has gone down from his head even to his feet. He would fain fill the whole world with the savour of Christ. In this same spirit, in which he walks on earth with men, he will be perfectly at home with the angels. The fragrance of his life has already gone into heaven, and prepared him a welcome.

Over the Christian's armour, and encompassing his whole

The shield.

Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

Prov. xxx. 5.

Ps. v. 12.

Gen. xv 1.

Prov. iii. 26.

Heb. x. 35.

person, there is a shield. God is his shield. "The Lord God is a sun and shield." "God is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him." "With favour wilt Thou compass the righteous, as with a shield." "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield." The shield then is clearly God's relation to his trusting child. Man on his part must take hold on this shield. Let him confide in it, and by no means drop it throughout his evil day. "The Lord shall be thy confidence and shall keep thy foot from being taken." "Cast not, therefore, away your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." "The shield of faith" is incomprehensible to the natural mind. It is the atmosphere in which the regenerate live. It is full of God and the powers of the eternal world. To those who live and breathe in it, it is the direct "evidence of things unseen." The victory which overcometh the world, and the shield which quenches the fiery darts of the enemy, are one and the same faith. The fiery darts of the Wicked One are the passions and lusts of this fleshly world. These passions and lusts can only be quenched by the shield of faith, or, in other words, by the realized presence of God and of a superior world. Apart from the encompassing shield of the Divine atmosphere, the darts of the Wicked One, instead of being quenched, are welcomed, and encouraged, until all remains of the life of Christ are consumed. "The desires of the flesh and of the mind" being kindled, a false fire burns within the soul, and quenches the fire of God. "Quench not the Spirit;" but by prayer, draw into, and about you, the air of eternity, in which no dart of the Wicked One can live. Let God's wall of pure, celestial fire encircle you, and the evil fire shall pale, and fall within you, even as your coal-fire pales and falls under the beams of the sun.

The Helmet.

The helmet shields and crowns the head. "Take the helmet of salvation." The precise idea of the apostle here might have been less clearly perceived, had he not himself expounded it, in his epistle to the Thessalonians; where he writes, "And for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath appointed us to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus

Christ." No quarter must be given to doubt, in the believer's soul. He is not engaged in a doubtful conflict. If he is clear as to his faith in Christ, his salvation by Christ is "sure and certain." It was an appointment of God, prior to all his works. "The Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed." Let the adversary find that it is more than his art can do, to stir in you distrust. Calmly, but without wavering, protest: "I know in Whom I have believed," and keep your eye fixed on the end,—the salvation of your soul. "Thus saith the Lord, Fear not, thou art Mine; I have redeemed thee; when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Hast thou not for thy "strong consolation," "God's two immutable things," namely, His eternal purpose, and His word of promise. Lift up your head then in the day of battle, and let all your enemies see that if you are not crowned with salvation, you are crowned with a Hope, which shall never make you ashamed. "The redeemed of the Lord shall come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." "Now the God of your Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, *that you may abound in Hope*, through the power of the Holy Spirit." Your Heavenly Father gives you His Spirit, that your hope may partake of the strength of His purpose in Christ. Like the plume which graces the top of the helmet, let your hope blossom on high, above the reach of fear and doubt.

1 Thes. v. 8, 9.

Deut. xxxi. 8.

Isa. xliii. 1, 2.

Isa. xxxv. 10.

Rom. xv. 13.

The Christian's sword is not only compatible with peace, but essential to peace. That the true peace may come in, the false peace must be destroyed. Eternal Truth is essential to eternal peace. Our goodwill to men must be faithful and earnest. Love itself requires us vigorously to ply the sword right and left, in cutting down the flattering and beloved errors of men. We must use it the more fearlessly, seeing that it is not our sword, nor any man's sword. "The sword

The Sword.

of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." The spirit-sword of immutable Truth is confided to us. Unhesitatingly we must thrust in this sharp sword with its two edges, amongst the self-confident reasonings and imaginations, which are the strongholds of Satan, in the natural mind. The high praises of God are directly associated with the work of this destructive sword, as it eats on its way, prevailing and prevailing. Psalm cxlix. 6. In withholding men from the Truth, Satan's artifice is to keep their minds full of self-pleasing knowledge, constantly engaged in fortifying their carnality by more and more plausible processes of reasoning, and entertained by every species of sensuous and engrossing imagery. Against this subtle pre-occupation of the souls of men, the children of God are called to wage war, and prepare the field for the reign of Truth, which is Salvation. "Blessed be the Lord my strength, Which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." "In Righteousness He doth judge and make war." "Out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations." "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the Breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." The same Breath brings Peace and Power to His true disciples. "Jesus stood in the midst, and saith to them, Peace be unto you. As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith to them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." This is the sword with which we are to make war, rebuking and destroying "imaginations, (λογισμοὺς, reasonings), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." "He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword."

Psa. cxliv. 1.
Rev. xix. 11, 15.
Isa. xi. 4.
John xx. 19-22.
Is. xlix. 2.

CHAP. VI. 18-20.—*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. 19. And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel. 20. For which I am an ambassador in a chain; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

We must not forget upon what the whole efficiency—nay, the very existence of our armour depends. It is “the armour of God;” the integrity of which depends on the integrity of our relation to Christ, and the reality of our intercourse with Him. If Christ be in us, as the ruling power of our souls, we are armed; but if the spirit of this world, rather than the Spirit of Christ, prevail within our heart, we are unarmed. If we rely on our profession of Christianity, or on a past experience, instead of seeking to be quickened daily by vital currents from God, our armour becomes a dream, a non-entity. It can never be separate from God, and therefore can only clothe us so long as we abide in direct fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. “Abide in me, and I in you.” “Without me, ye can do nothing.” Unless the health of His countenance streams into the inner man, vivifying and strengthening all our powers, our Christianity will be but an encumbrance, oppressing the spirit, as Saul’s armour oppressed David. The girdle, the breastplate, the shield, the helmet, &c., &c., are but an amplification of the 10th verse: “My brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.” If, therefore, thinking nothing about armour, we are only careful to walk with elevated spirits, looking unto Jesus, we are in complete armour. If the enemy never finds us alone, but always finds the Lord in us, we are safe. By prayer, therefore, keep the way open between God and your soul.

The relation of prayer to the efficiency of the armour.

Paul intimates that there are many kinds and methods of prayer. In order to be “strong in the Lord,” he counsels us to be “praying always, with all prayer.” A self-imposed duty, discharged at set times, is clearly not his idea of prayer. It is rather a living friendship, including a rich variety of communion. Prayer is the life of God in the soul, running through, and qualifying, the whole circle of our thoughts and affections. At times the holy fire will be a clear flame, ascending straight to heaven, carrying your soul along with it, a glowing sacrifice to God; at other times, it will be but a smoke of desire. But let it never go out. There is strong prayer, when every power in

Praying always with every kind of prayer.

the soul combines to lay hold on God ; and there is a state of tacit prayer, when the soul rests in contemplation, and the still small rain of God, refreshes and fertilises both the heart and mind. There is intense prayer, when the soul is an agony of desire ; and there is the prayer of tranquil submission. There is prayer which abounds in hope ; and there is the prayer of oppression and fear. The upturned eye, swimming in light, indicates a praying spirit ; but the downcast eye, clouded with self-reproach, bears witness that the spirit is praying no less earnestly. There is the smoothly flowing prayer of thanksgiving, when the soul is full of the goodness of the Lord ; and there is the prayer of the broken heart, confessing and deploring sin and depravity. There is the prayer of ecstasy, which exclaims ; “ I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. My meditation of Him shall be sweet. I will exult in the Lord.” Or as when Mary said : “ My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.” And there is the hidden prayer of sighs and groans, which cannot be uttered. Every kind of prayer is acceptable to God, and profitable to the soul. Every season of the year, and every hour of the day, and of the night, are reflected in our ever-changing spiritual conditions ; and in them all we should freely use our privilege of childlike communion with our God and Father.

If, apparently, He takes no notice of us, if we have prayed for years and found nothing, we should still pray on. “ Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” It is God’s manner to bear long with His children. In the end, He will do for them exceeding abundantly above all that they have ever asked, or thought. Says our Lord, when urging perseverance in prayer : “ Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them ? I tell you that He will.” Prayer delayed is seed sown in heaven. God allows our capital to accumulate in His own hands. No prayer, no tear, is lost. But it is much more for our profit, that tenderness of desire be kept alive in us, than that we should be indulged in spiritual joy.

The continuous spirit of prayer is not only profitable for

Ps. civ. 33.
34.

Luke i. 46, 47.

Luke xviii. 1.

Luke xviii. 7,
8.

Prayer for all
Saints.

the individual, but fulfils a service "for all Saints." Every member of the body of Christ, is related to every other member. Through intermediate joints and links, the condition of each one, more or less affects all. We are incorporated with all saints. We have an inheritance in them all. We receive good, and shall for ever receive good from them all. We all contribute to the common atmosphere, in which the whole body of believers live and breathe. Most watchfully, for the sake of all, we should abide in a spirit of prayer. Our sins and evil affections vitiate, and our prayers purify, the atmosphere of all souls. The spirit of sonship which is in us; from the One Beloved Son, is a spirit of love not only to all saints, but to all men. The love of Christ passeth knowledge, and expands the desires of the soul, until they embrace the whole world. "I exhort that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for *all men*." The love of God which prayeth, in us, for men in India or Greenland, is as much moving there as in our hearts. Nothing is far off from God. No one can be too far from us to be reached by the spirit of prayer. The magnetic fluid has commenced its work of bringing all nations into an inter-communion of sympathy. The lightning of God's Spirit, no sooner breaketh out in the east than it shineth in the west. Stars throw not out their beams so far as Souls. The outgoings of God, through the sympathies and affections of His children, are by no means shut up in the Church. "They go down into the desert, and go into the sea; which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed." "The waters are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

1 Tim. ii. 1.

Ezek. xlviii.

Rev. xvii. 15.

Pray also "for me," Paul.

Paul is humble enough to beg special prayer for himself:—"for all saints, *and for me*." As a joint-heir with all saints of the eternal kingdom, he is a needy man; but as an ambassador for Christ, he is still more in need. Although an old man and a prisoner, he does not even suggest that his friends should pray for his personal liberty; but that his chain may neither fetter his soul nor his tongue. Pray that the Truth in Christ may be more earnestly spoken, and more widely spread, through "my

Rom. i. 15.
The answer.

Col. i. 5, 6.

chain." His imprisonment had already promoted the very end of his ambassadorship. It had not only given him the desire of his heart, which was, that he might preach the Gospel in Rome, but through foreigners and travellers, he was communicating it to the ends of the earth. His burning words were carried every where. In his letter to the Colossians, he writes : "the word of the Truth of the Gospel which is come unto you, *as it is in all the world.*" Beyond his spoken words, his epistles, written in confinement, made known the mystery of Christ, with a fulness and precision, and withal, with a majesty of boldness, which his bodily presence could never have done. In person, he was not commanding ; but an enemy acknowledges that "his letters are weighty and powerful," 2 Cor. x. 10. In them, Paul is still speaking, with an authority such as no king ever had. The words of all philosophers, from the beginning of the world, are doing less for immortal man, than the words which we owe to Paul's chain. Paul left no children, according to the flesh, but like another Abraham, his spiritual seed is "as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea-shore, innumerable." The Empire of the Cæsars is not ; but after eighteen centuries, the human race is still coming, and coming in ever-increasing numbers, to sit at the feet of the ambassador which Rome held in bonds. The singular ability and boldness which were given to this man, "to make known the mystery of the Gospel," have secured for him as a teacher, both universality and immortality.

According to him, no one should preach the Gospel timidly or apologetically. Ask God, said he, that I may neither speak weakly nor hesitatingly, but "boldly, as I ought to speak." He desired to be an example to all men of the freedom and power, of the love and enlargement, of the riches and unity, of our New Humanity in Christ Jesus. How should one speak whose subject is the glory of God, and the hope of man ? If the truth of the Gospel be a question, then God's character is lost, and the creation has no end that is worthy of respect. The truth of the Gospel is the absolute necessity. It is never, therefore, to be degraded down to a level with the appearances

and laws of the material universe ; nor is it to be presented as a well-reasoned probability ; but as the open mystery of the Father, and of the eternal humanity of Christ. The Gospel not only ranks in the category of what is real and eternal, but is the clear, known, and certain solution of every human and cosmical difficulty. It is the revelation of an order of things which was in God before the world began. There is nothing arbitrary about it. It is but God reflected, and as He is to be reflected in the mirror of renovated humanity and renovated nature. No one who knows the Gospel ever says, It may be true ; he is sure that it alone is *the Truth*, unto the glory of God, the joy of men, and of the whole creation. If the Gospel be not a revelation of *the Truth*, then there is no true God. There is neither justice nor goodness in the Maker of all things, if the Gospel be not the truth of His Heart and Purpose.

VII.

THE CONCLUSION.

CHAP. VI. 21, 22.—*But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known unto you all things : 22 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that you might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.*

Tychicus. Almost these very words are repeated in the Epistle to the Colossians. Tychicus is the bearer of both epistles, and seems to be worthy of the honour. There must have been much in common between this Asiatic and Paul. More than a brother, he calls him “the beloved brother,” and “faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord.” How beautiful are the feet of this brother, shod with peace and beauty, “the preparedness of the Gospel.” From Paul, the direct ambassador of Jesus, whose words have about them a charm, as of the warmth of the third heavens, Tychicus brings circular letters, which are to be everywhere read by the Churches and the disciples. A letter is much, a letter accompanied by the living face and voice of a messenger is more ; especially when the messenger is an intimate friend. One of the special ends of divine Providence is to enrich the final inter-communion of human hearts. Separations, sorrows, bereavements, and all the new links of friendship, which are created by these afflictions, are working together to give to the soul greater depth and more acute sensibilities, as well as to augment the common interest of our future relationships. Paul leaves much for his friend to communicate in free and homely speech. His letters will be a storehouse of wisdom for all time. But personal matters—all such particulars as are interesting between friends—they will get by

Col. iv. 7.

word of mouth from Tychicus. "He shall make known unto you all things."

It is but another proof of the fatherliness of Paul's love to his converts, and of his confidence in their childlike love to him, that he takes for granted their desire to know everything about himself. The next thing to seeing me, and being with me, will be to see this beloved brother whom I send to you. You will be able to learn every thing about me from his lips. No written words could, in the same way, put them in possession of minutiae about his health, circumstances, daily life, and prospects. The same things cannot be communicated on paper, which a living friend supplies by the tones of his voice, by the play of his countenance, and by the ever-changing expressions of his eye. Sitting face to face with Tychicus, the partition would be very thin between Paul and the various churches which he had planted. And with what intentness of eye and ear, they would watch and listen, remembering the words which he had spoken to them, the last time they were together: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." They would ask a thousand questions, and eating into their souls the words of Tychicus, they would almost feel that they were in the presence of their never-to-be-forgotten friend and pastor again. "I have sent him unto you *that he might comfort your hearts.*"

Advantages of
face to face
communica-
tion.

Acts xx. 25.

Human life is made up not only of things high and holy, but of little interchanges of courtesy and pleasantry, which no wise man will despise. We will retain our mountains, our broad rivers, and our tall trees; but we will not part with our homely flowers. We cannot always be great, nor always be doing great things. When the angel of God passes our way, we will gladly be drawn out beyond ourselves; but more frequently we will be at our ease in the green pastures, enjoying the delightful nothings of social life, while noiselessly, without a strain, soul flows in upon soul.

Where shall we be, when some beloved Tychicus shall bring to *us* tidings of Paul's affairs? How he looks now! how he

has been occupied through the centuries ! and what service he is now rendering to angels and to men ! He belongs as much to us, as to the men of his own day. All who have read, loved, and studied his epistles, have contracted a very real relationship to him. Paul has diffused himself through millions, who constitute a special order of minds, bound together, and fitted for future fellowship and co-operation.

CHAP. VI. 23, 24.—*Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption. Amen.*

As he began, so he closes his epistle, pouring out his heart unto God for his brethren. All who had obtained like precious faith with him, were his brethren and companions for endless life. “For my brethren and companions’ sakes, I will now say, peace be within thee. Because of the House of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.” Of what a house have we become members by our union with Christ ! Think of its antiquity, its many mansions, its orders, its multitudes, its affections ; and God in all, and all in God. Salutations come to us from heaven, and from the ends of the earth. “All the saints salute you.” Those in heaven, even more than those on earth. Not only your ancestors and friends in heaven, but angels, apostles, martyrs, salute you. They rejoice exceedingly that you are taken up into their number. They hail you, embrace you, welcome you. “All the saints” send you good wishes, and all that is in God is eager to bless you.

Ps. cxvii 8, 9.
The brethren,
and their
mutual affec-
tions.

Peace.

The affections of God and of His children together, constitute a mighty peace. Paul, in closing his letter, calls out, from God and heaven, this “great peace”—outbreathes it in his living love towards the brethren. All things are in this peace, and all things reconciled. It is the crown of the God-man, Christ Jesus. It is God’s fulness. The Holy Spirit is

peace. It cannot be numbered nor uttered. It is the life of all God's powers in a harmony of active rest. It "passeth understanding." The peace which springs out of the pure eternal love of God the Father, and of which our Lord, in the night of His agony, spoke again and again, as being His peace, must be a very deep, interior power. All the billows of wrath which heaved within Him, and broke over His soul, did not reach to that inmost temple of His Spirit, in which the power of His Father was living and reigning. The seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel is a standing evidence, for all time, that, in His darkest and most awful night, there was a communion of mighty peace between Him and His Father. In our nature, He found fear and sorrow, overwhelming sorrow; but in God, confidence and peace. The humanity of Jesus is now unassailable. It is a fortress of peace, against which all the powers of hell are helpless. Paul prays that his brethren may know the peace of God, which is built up in the man, Jesus Christ. He was persuaded that no tribulation, either in this world or the world to come, could break the peace which he himself had found in Christ. It was in him, and at the same time in "God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ," flowing into him moment by moment, from its divine source.

He not only ascribes this peace, but our love and faith also, directly to God. "Peace be to the brethren, *and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Faith and Love. Nothing short of a divinely-wrought faith and love will be able to receive the peace of God. The Father, in His Son, by His Spirit, must open His own way to us, and both prepare and fill the double vessel of our heart and mind. Faith and love are His own work, and are the open channels by which His peace flows into, and fills the inner man.

Instead of breaking the Unity of God, the Trinity is essential to His Unity. As without the Father, the Son were an impossibility, so likewise without the Son, God were no Father. Or to speak in a figure, Without the Divine Root and Ground, no Flower of Godhead could be; and without the Flower, the Root were unmanifested even to Itself. Also The Trinity.

without the Spirit, proceeding equally from the Root and Flower, no proceeding action could be, and therefore neither creature nor creation.

In order to be blessed, we must be related to the hidden root and ground of God, and we must also be related to the Flower or "Beauty of God," in order to know and enjoy Him. But without the Spirit of God we could be related to neither. We cannot be a part of God any more than our earth can be a part of the sun; but how truly we are taken up into God, by God; in His Spirit, coming down into us. "God is Love," and His Son is "the Son of His Love;" and by His Spirit, both the hiddenness and the glory of His Love are shed abroad in our hearts. The Spirit which is given to us, proceeding equally from the Father and the Son, is both the Spirit that *loves*, and the Spirit that is *beloved*. Unless in our One God there were the Loving One and the Beloved, there were no ground for family relationships, and no source whatever of unity and joy.

Grace.

"The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is the gracious Love of the Only Begotten of the Father, reaching, touching, gracing, transforming, blessing our nature: "The Love of God," which gives brilliance and living action to the sun, fragrance and flavour to fruits, odour and beauty to flowers, and good to everything, "be with you." "The Love of God," give you light, loveliness, fragrance, and every virtue. "The Love of God," which makes the relation between the sexes so keen, so tender, and fruitful, be with you; that the keen, tender, fruitful life may be in you and abound. "The Love of God," which makes the inexpressible bond between mother and babe, be with you, an inexpressible bond between you and His Christ. "The Love of God," that pure flame of life, which springs in Jesus, and clothes Him with ever-living glory, be with you, the pledge and earnest of your immortality with Him. "The Love of God," which rests in its own All-Sufficiency to redeem the whole creation from all evil, and to fill and flood it with His own Life and Glory, be with you, that you may abound in hope, giving glory to God. "The Love of God,"

which is too pure for a mortal's sight, and too intense for a sinner's soul, be with you, as a sweetly tempered power, in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Being bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh, He knows what you can bear, and the ardour of His Father's Love, in its passage through Him to you, He softeneth down to a mild grace.

Everything you need to make you good, wise, humble, lovely, useful, and happy, is comprehended in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you care for yourself and your immediate friends only, and not for others also, is it not that you have too little of the grace of Jesus Christ? Or if you show a self-loving partiality for your own Church, and a prejudice against other churches, would not more of the grace of the Lord Jesus enlarge your heart, and correct the one-sidedness of your character? If you carry yourself haughtily towards any one, is not that a sign that your own spirit is strong, and the grace of Christ weak in you? Do not your impatience, irritability, and anger, give evidence of your deficiency in Grace? If you are fretful or downcast under suffering, would not more of the grace of Jesus produce in you an exactly contrary condition? If you surrender your tongue to foolish talking, does it not argue an absence of the dignity and wisdom which are in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? If you fall into any vice or sin whatsoever, would not a greater measure of His grace restrain you? It is clear, therefore, that the grace of Christ is precisely what you want, to make you everything that you should be. It is everything that can relate you happily to God and advantageously to man. One word expresses the whole circle of your wants. For that one word, Grace, stands for "the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus." It is the virtue of His all-perfect Humanity operating within you, the one thing that roots, grows, and opens in us every excellence and charm of spirit and character.

"Grace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ (ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ) in incorruption." Where love is not, relation is not; and without relation to the Son of God, there can be no renewal. Therefore, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus

That one word,
Grace, is all
our need.

Love to
Christ, ἐν
ἀφθαρσίᾳ.

1 Cor. xvi. 22. Christ, he will be Anathema Maranatha." He can be nothing else. For not being a recipient of the transforming power of the Son of God, he must abide in the limitations, darkness, and curse, of his own unloving and unlovely spirit. Every man must either love, and abide by his own corrupt nature, or love and appropriate the Divine humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ. To love Him is to loathe our own impurity, and to long for His Purity. It is not only the Divine love, but the Divine wisdom also which prays in Paul : Grace be with all them that love, &c. Grace will be with them. All others are rejecters of Grace, and therefore abide "children of wrath." The word ἀφθαρσις, by which the apostle characterizes the affection of Christ-loving souls, means incapacity of decay. It is the condition of immortal natures, and eminently of our Lord's glorious body. In 1 Cor. xv. the word occurs four times, and, in each instance, is rendered "incorruption." In Romans ii. 7, and in 2 Tim. i. 10, it is rendered "immortality." In the humanity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, death is abolished, and immortality brought to light, for all men. To all them that love Him, He gives power to be sons of God, in His own eternal life. Loving the incorruptible, immortal man, they become what they love. Receiving His Spirit of life, they are changed into the same image, and constituted, as He is, for immortality. What they love, that they are, in the centre of their being ; and what they are in their inmost spirit, they shall be in their whole eternal body. Whatever is not in man's love falls away from him, as having no essential inherence ; but whatever is in his inmost love clothes him for ever. His love to Christ opens, fulfils, and crowns itself, in his endless form. As our earthly end was involved in our earthly beginning, so, in the Divine beginning of our love to Christ, is involved our Divine end.

Jude, 24, 25.

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• LORD

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